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THE HUMAN FACE DIVINE,
AND OTHER TALES.



“ O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a life-long trouble to ourselves,
By taking true for false or false for true ;
Here, thro’ the feeble twilight of this world
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen ! ”

TENNYSON. “ *Idylls of the King.* ”

THE

HUMAN **F**ACE **D**IVINE,

AND OTHER TALES.

Margaret (Scott)
BY MRS. ALFRED GATTY,

AUTHOR OF "PARABLES FROM

NATURE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARA S. LANE.

FOURTH EDITION.



LONDON :

GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

1882

*BJ1571

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Storage

CHISWICK PRESS :—C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT,
CHANCERY LANE.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

TO THE ELDER SISTERS

IN FAMILIES,

THESE THREE TALES ARE

DEDICATED

BY

M. G.

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THE HUMAN FACE DIVINE.

—————“ when he saw
The God within him light his face.”

TENNYSON. *In Memoriam.*

HAVING been, for a couple of years, in the habit of contributing to periodical publications, I was pleased, if not greatly surprised, one evening, at receiving a visit from the editor of a magazine of some popularity and good report.

I was not totally unacquainted with this gentleman. I had met him once or twice at the evening parties of a certain literary clique, which occasionally honoured me with an invitation, and we had there become known to each other. He was several years older than myself, and had Scotch blood in his veins—a fact I guessed at, at a first interview, from finding his conversation insensibly take a metaphysical turn.

There is no reasoning about diversities of taste. The very word *metaphysical* may possibly deter some

people from continuing to read these pages ; but, on the other hand, those who have an inclination for such studies will thoroughly appreciate the pleasure which the discovery I have spoken of caused me.

What a refuge from the weariness of conventional small talk !—an evil from which the literary world is by no means exempt. Literary folk, when once established into a set, are apt to become sadly didactic and legislative, and there is no resource for the outsiders who are among them by sufferance, but to sit patiently by, listen, and give way to all current opinions, or at any rate keep silence, if they think differently. I learned this lesson on my first introduction at the house in question. Some one had loudly ridiculed a favourite author, and I was rash enough to engage in a warm defence. Of course, I should never make the mistake a second time, but knowing nothing then of the nature of a literary clique—as I felt, so I spoke.

But I soon understood my position, for, at the first pause, one of these literary Lord Chief Justices, without noticing a word I had said, or even alluding to the possibility of a second opinion existing, as it were put on the black cap of office, and in a few caustic words passed sentence of condemnation, *in sæcula sæculorum*, on the writer alluded to. There was no appeal. If I looked up surprised, for a moment, nobody observed it, and when I glanced enquiringly round, the only people who had listened were echoing the verdict as a matter of course. Of course, therefore, the thing was settled, and certainly

my lesson was learnt ; and I had made the unexpected discovery, that there exists as much of the close-borough principle in intellectual society as elsewhere. That this was sure to act as a restriction upon freedom of intercourse, there could be no doubt, and so far it was disappointing, but I cared little or nothing about it myself. I had no heart just then to trouble myself about trifles.

I had only lately been forced to turn to worldly advantage the share of talents which God had given me, and both head and heart were fully occupied.

To keep myself inoffensive, and interest myself as best I might in what I heard, became thenceforth my only attempts, and they succeeded very fairly, for I was asked at intervals again and again to the house, and generally carried away a something to remember either of what people said, or of what I observed among them.

Nevertheless I did, at times, get very weary of the conventional common-places to which I confined myself, and impatient of the necessity of a tacit agreement with the received views which formed the creed of the little community.

It was on one such occasion, when I was more than usually stupid and tired, that the Scotch editor, out of good nature, and seeing that I looked lonely, came and spoke to me, and fell into a conversation, which, as I said, insensibly lapsed into metaphysics, and I awoke to a sense of enjoyment which I had never experienced in any of my visits before, and which I still look back upon, as an era in my literary life.

How could it be otherwise? We talked of the grave things of this life, and even of those of the life to come: we spoke of authors with reference to what their writings inculcated, quite as much as to the fictitious laws of artistic skill, and I went away instructed, and comforted, regretting the end of the evening, and feeling that this was some realization of my dream of what intellectual intercourse should be.

No doubt there are schools of metaphysics as of everything else, and, therefore, cliques of metaphysicians, taking different lines upon abstruse subjects, and becoming as narrow-minded as all other cliques, but I am not alluding to anything of that sort in my use of the word *metaphysical*. By metaphysical I merely mean, something beyond the things of physical material life,—a justifiable use of the term. And it was no wonder that such subjects had a charm for me. My physical life was too much burdened with care, too little graced with enjoyments, for me to wish to dwell upon it. Whatever happiness I could hope for must be in the life beyond and out of that, and who could bear to exist without some aspirations and hopes?

It seems strange that such a taste should need an apology, but experience has shown me that it does. Having made one, however, and given an excuse for my predilection, I have only to add, that a few months after that memorable day I met the same gentleman at the same place, and that the evening passed as happily with me as before; and now, after another long interval, the individual called at my

lodgings, to speak to me, as he said, on a little matter of business.

My spirits rose at once, for I had never written for any publication as important as his magazine, and employment from him was a great step in the fortunes of one whose pleasure-writing had been converted, very unexpectedly, into working for a competency.

I therefore bore, without any impatience, the little delay caused by his glancing round the room at my somewhat unusual array of books, and making a few hasty remarks upon them; but I was too anxious to be able to talk myself, and my friend quickly discovering this fact, came to me, as I stood expectantly on the rug, and at once asked me to contribute a tale to his magazine. My assent being given with honest pleasure and expressions of gratification at the request, the editor proceeded to state that it was an autobiographic tale he wanted, and one on a particular subject.

I was all attention, but he paused as if hesitating.

“And that is?” I asked.

“Rather a comical one I am afraid you will think,” was the reply. “The notion came into my head a day or two ago, that the autobiography of a woman of unusual abilities, highly cultivated mind, refined tastes and feelings, and ardent affections, but, *decidedly plain* in person, would be a remarkably curious and interesting record. What do you think?”

The editor looked at me as he spoke, and I looked at him in return; but as I made no answer he pro-

ceeded. "It must be anatomical in its character, of course. You must describe all the ins and outs of the emotions, mortifications, and even sufferings, such a fate is likely to entail: as, for instance, the improbability of inspiring the passion of love. Above all, you must bring out the delicate organization. Where no great sensitiveness of apprehension exists, the absence of beauty is comparatively but little of an evil; hundreds of plain people are not even aware of the fact; hundreds of others are far too self-satisfied in other respects to care about it; conceit is a great consoler; but in the instance I have suggested you are aware the case is very different!"

I certainly was aware of it, for the description he had given came, alas! painfully home; at all events that part of it which concerned the want of personal attractiveness.

However, I stood there, not as a friend, scarcely as an acquaintance; but simply as a person to be employed over a "little matter of business;" and it was of no consequence whether intercourse with me had originated this bright idea of the editor's or not. So as a little matter of business I received it; only expressing a modest doubt whether I was capable of carrying out his suggestions to his satisfaction.

But on this point he professed himself to feel quite at ease. *I* had been the person who instantly came into his head, as the best qualified of any one he knew to evolve the idea; "requiring as it did," he added, "extreme delicacy of feeling, and acquaintance with, and interest in, the minute workings of the human heart."

I bowed my acknowledgment of the compliment, and then asked if he had any particular wish as to how the autobiographic tale should end.

“Why that is, to tell you honestly the truth,” replied he, “my great puzzle. I have been thinking of it as I came along, but I cannot make up my mind. It would be difficult you see, in such a case, to end the lady’s troubles by the usual remedy of a happy marriage; such a conclusion would be inharmonious, and jar against general ideas. Nothing could make it go down. It is a great pity, but so it is. I really think I must leave this part of the business entirely in your hands. Perhaps you can devise some plan for making her attractive even in the face of adverse probabilities. A fairy and a magic vial would do it in five minutes; but I want real life and no fancy. Well! you must consider the case, and do your best; and if, as I fear, you cannot make her, as a decidedly plain woman, interesting enough to be loved, I vote that you throw her into a decline, and let her write her memoirs as an employment during a protracted illness; adding a concluding note by a friend to the effect that the earthly tabernacle, so unworthy of the soul it enshrined, was at length laid down.”

“To rise in beauty as well as glory on the other side of the grave!” was my involuntary exclamation.

“Exactly!” echoed the editor. “You have completely caught my view I see, and will do it ample justice. I was certain from the first that it

was impossible to find anyone so well fitted as yourself for the task I had to propose."

"One word more," I said. "What is to be the moral, or do you wish for one? What is the tale to inculcate?"

"The moral!" murmured the editor to himself, musing. "Well—certainly I should like a moral if one could be found. But I confess that I do not see how it is possible. No teaching or preaching will make people like plain faces in reality, although you may throw some interest over a particular case by an early death. No! I think you must be content with making the tale an anatomical revelation of feeling, and let the moral alone."

"It is against the usual rules of surgery to lay open a wound without making an effort to heal it," I observed.

"My dear lady, there are some wounds which are not intended to be healed in this world," replied the editor.

"No doubt," I answered, "but for that very reason there may be a question as to the propriety of exposing them to the idle gaze of the indifferent, and cold-hearted."

"But may one not sometimes hope to soften such monsters of society by painting suffering well? People don't think, won't think, and consequently do not care. To force them to think by vivid pictures is a good deed therefore. Besides, apart from this, there will be, for women especially, a psychological interest about such a case, and I num-

ber many ladies among the supporters of my magazine."

"And I dare say the beauties among them *will* enjoy the revelations, as you say," exclaimed I. "The contrast will serve to bring out their own happier fate in still brighter colours than before. What the decidedly plain ones will think and feel is not quite so clear."

I suppose I made this remark with some sharpness of tone, for the editor looked at me for a moment with surprise, then answered:—

"I do believe you have no fancy for this scheme of mine. Am I right? If I am, say so, and it shall be thrown overboard at once. It will not do to force your inclinations. Pray let there be no misunderstanding between us." He drew his chair closer to mine. "Let us talk the matter quietly over. The idea of this tale occurred to me and I fancied it a good one; and you occurred to me as precisely the person to undertake it. But I am not wedded to the thing at all. For instance, if you prefer throwing your ideas on the subject into the form of an essay, do so by all means. Essays were charming things when people combined simplicity of style with concentrated thought. The cleverest of our authors would be puzzled to write either a "Rambler" or a "Spectator" now. They would need twenty pages to express the ideas contained in one of Johnson's or Addison's best. Suppose you try your hand in this long-neglected art. Let me have an essay on Ugliness and Beauty. What do you think? I am

no tyrant to my contributors, and I really wish you to become one. Let me have something, but I give you *carte blanche* as to what it shall be, and you may even choose another theme altogether, if you do not think as I do about this."

"I think as you do, but feel a great deal more," was my hasty reply. Then, vexed with myself for the vexed feelings which prompted these half-betraying words, I met the enquiring look of my friend with a smile, and assured him, again and again, that I had—that I could have—no possible objection to his original plan, that I was flattered by his opinion of my qualifications, and would do my utmost to write—"I smiled again as I concluded—"as affecting an autobiography as the subject would admit of!"

The editor seemed perfectly satisfied—nay, even delighted. "Make your heroine in every other respect charming," cried he, in conclusion, as we shook hands. "Above all, give her an organization of acute sensibility. The deepest stores of feeling are to be found under that stratum. But I hardly think I need tell *you* this!"

That last sentence was uttered hastily and as he turned to go; but he had yet another word for me before he passed through the door.

"I never think there is much effect produced by general statements or sweeping accounts. You must work out the girl's struggles and wretchedness minutely, and down to the very roots, remember!"—"And break my own heart in the doing it, which

matters neither to you nor to any living soul!"—muttered I to myself, as I closed the door after my visitor, and listened to his retreating footsteps.

The next thing I did was to lock it against intruders, and then walk across the room to a small mirror, which was hung on the wall, and gaze fixedly at the reflection of myself.

Alas! alas! alas! there was no possibility of mistaking the case! Where was the rounded contour, the delicate colouring, the soft lustrous eye, the chiselled nose, the finely curved lips—the anything which forms a part or parcel of that which we call beauty in this world? Not certainly in the reflection which met my troubled stare. What fellowship had that disturbed expression, those commonplace features, those thin cheeks, those anxious sad looking eyes, with beauty? Absolutely none! I covered it all up with my hands and burst into tears. "The man concludes that I neither feel nor care about a fact I have known so long and so well!" was my inward thought.

And why I should care about it then, I really scarcely knew, as I told myself two minutes afterwards. Certainly not because it was a novelty to me to find myself recognized as a plain young woman of cultivated mind. I had been used to it all my life. Even in the happiest of times, when our parents yet lived, and brothers and sisters were around me in the same house, it was an acknowledged fact that I had not inherited the family good looks, and was by so much inferior to the others.

By so much:—but at how much that so much was valued it was difficult to say. I never knew, nor durst ask; but in going out and coming in, in the domestic circle, as in the society of friends and acquaintance, I was looked upon and considered as *the plain one*:—the plain Miss ——.

Relations spoke of it openly, and wished I had been more like my sisters. Friends let it out accidentally every now and then, by some inadvertent remark still more mortifying; and in our girlish *côteries*, when in conclave we talked together of who had been admired in public, it was never surmised as possible that such a fate could ever be mine. No one had made remarks upon me, asked who I was, or wished for an introduction; and in ball-rooms if I danced a little, it was but a little, and never with the free sense of enjoyment. Everlastingly hampered by the consciousness of a want of grace and good looks, I could not free myself from the painful suspicion that I was only asked to dance from a motive of good-natured pity;—a self-sacrificing compassion for a *decidedly plain* human being.

I was happier, of course, in society where anything deserving the name of conversation was carried on; but even there, there was a thorn in the flesh for me. Even in talking upon subjects in which I was most at home, and felt the greatest interest, if my listener looked at me with any unusual attention, I was immediately haunted by a sensation that he was thinking rather of my ugliness as I spoke, than of what I was saying, and shrank disheartened into

myself. Everybody would rather talk to anybody than to me, even when I had plenty to say—I was so *decidedly plain*. Besides which, although I had plenty to say about anything that was serious or really interesting, and could enjoy anything really funny with all my heart, I had no skill or taste for the brilliant superficial chatter which comes so naturally from young people in high spirits. The light unmeaning badinage about nothing, which makes the evening pass away in smiles I never could thoroughly enter into, and used to almost feel myself grow uglier and uglier as I tried to smile and share in what my very nature seemed to forbid me from attempting.

In excuse for so much egotistical introversion, it must be borne in mind that the subject of good looks was perpetually forced upon my attention, either by disparaging remarks on myself, or praise of others. I was never allowed to forget my personal defects. Of course, this reiteration of disagreeable home truths was perfectly well meant, but that it was a great error in judgment I cannot for a moment doubt. In consequence of it I found it difficult, if not impossible, to forget myself.

So certainly I had been used enough to the idea of being plain, if custom could have cured me of regretting it: but perhaps during my solitary literary career I had gradually thought of it less and less:—perhaps even entertained some delusive dream that, in a society where intellectual attainments took the lead, personal appearance would not be of so

much importance. And now it mortified me to find my hopes overthrown. “*No teaching or preaching will make people like plain faces in reality, although you may throw some interest over a particular case by an early death.*” The words rang in my ears, and yet I actually laughed as I repeated them to myself. And then I got up and stretched out my arm and a clenched fist towards the doorway, (very much like a tragedy heroine I suspect, if anybody had been there to see—for true passion, when not held back by forms, *does* show itself in action,) and called out as loudly as I durst, without the risk of being heard:—

“*You, a metaphysician! You, a philosopher! You, a reader of the human heart! You, the wise and large-minded! You, who have struck a woman in the tenderest point, and either do not know it, and are a fool, or do know it, and are a cold-hearted brute!*”

As I ground these words from between my teeth, I unclenched my hand and stretched out the fingers to the uttermost, till my very passion seemed to pass from their tips as I strained; and then the fit of sorrowful vexation came to a close; and I walked up and down the room and recollected how little it signified; recollected that my business for the present was, to labour so as to secure a comfortable independence; and my care for the future, “so to pass through things temporal, as finally not to lose the things eternal;” and that with the pursuit

of these two objects my personal defects of appearance could never in any way interfere.

An hour afterwards I was sitting at my solitary evening meal, looking longingly at the papers and writing materials which lay on the opposite side of the table, shining in the lamp-light, awaiting the conclusion of my tea-drinking. And very soon I was seated before them in all the enjoyment I was usually wont to experience, when beginning a fresh piece of writing with the pleasant prospect of remuneration before me.

But, after all, the actual return to the disturbing subject of plainness was, in spite of my best efforts, disagreeable; and I dipped my pen in ink several times in vain, and when I did commence it was as follows:—

“The greatest misfortune which can befall a woman, is, to be decidedly plain.”

—What? greater than bereavements? greater than loss of health, or limbs, or reason? What a wicked idea! people will be disgusted.—So soliloquised I to myself and drew my pen heavily through the obnoxious remark.

—Yet,—mused I again,—all other misfortunes, real misfortunes, if one may so call them, excite pity and tenderness, sympathy and even love towards the sufferer, which is never the case with the misfortune of being plain; so that at any rate it is one of the most *hopeless* misfortunes in the world, and thereby one of the greatest. The remark is not so wicked

when properly explained ;—and accordingly I made restoring dots under the scratched-out sentence, and wrote an emphatic *stet* in the margin, adding in conclusion :—“ *For it is the only one which excites no pity, calls forth no tenderness, warms no fellow-heart to sympathy and love ; but must be borne in silence, unowned to as a misfortune, unspoken of, uncomforted—only suffered !*”

—But, oh mercy ! how laboured ! how heavy ! how hopelessly dull !—Such was my involuntary conviction, when I re-read what I had written.—If the tale opens in this ridiculous manner not a soul will get beyond the first page. I hate it !—On the strength of which conclusion I crossed the whole passage out, and leant back to think.

Now what I thought was, that if I could but think myself into the condition of the unfortunate young lady on her sick bed, I might strike out something much more touching as an introductory paragraph. So I shut my eyes and thought, and thought, and at the end of a quarter of an hour wrote :—

“ *The scene is closing around me ; the world eludes my hold. There open upon me clearer judgments, brighter hopes, illuminations unknown before. I would fain inspire others with the convictions I now feel. I would fain also put on record the mortifications and sufferings of my past life, that those who are destined to follow me in the same thorny path may not feel they alone have been called upon to endure. Reader, whoever you may be, I shame not now to avow, that I belong to that most fatally*

uninteresting of all classes of created beings—the class of plain young women! You smile?—Ay, you in your youth and beauty can afford to smile; my sorrows are a foil to your joys: and you, oh sister in affliction, the blush of shame rises to your cheek, as you read and dread the fellowship I claim with you! Yet turn not away, thou troubled heart! Pass with me through the blighting vexations of my early days, and I will lead you far beyond them, to the Pisgah whence I now behold with rapture the promised land in store, and look back upon the thorns of the wilderness as not worthy of remembrance. The hour has come at last to me, and will come one day to you, when one contemplates with pitiful amazement the absurd emotions of life.”

Thus far I wrote without stop or stay, then halted to read over the fresh attempt; but one glance was enough.—Oh, the twaddle, the atrocious trash, the stiltified rubbish, the insincere humbug! “Who on earth would give a rush,” cried I mentally, “to know that dying young ladies think they have been very silly in caring whether they were pretty or not! Of course, while they were alive and felt to have life before them, they could not help caring. Who expects to inspire the living with the feelings of the dying? Who would wish to do it if he could? There is no reality about such stuff as this!” And with this conviction strong upon me, I tore the paper across from end to end and threw it at my feet. It was a sad hour that I now passed; I brooded over my papers with a fear at my heart that I should fail in

my task, and miss both the honour and profit so temptingly held out.

Peculiarly qualified to evolve the idea? I knew why the editor thought so, but here was a plain proof to the contrary. Nay, probably because I *had* suffered in the same way, as he wished me to make the heroine suffer, I was peculiarly *unqualified* for the thing. It would seem so indeed! I walked up and down the room, and pondered what was to be done. Didactic essay writing was not within my reach. I was conscious that I became stupid as well as stiff when I attempted it, and I felt equally sure that I ended in being silly when I tried to be sentimental.

At last I owned to myself that there was but one chance for me: I must describe simply and straightforwardly, with such slight *historical* alterations, so to speak, as would serve for a blind, the feelings I had myself gone through, from my youth upwards.

This was, certainly, bringing the surgical operation of anatomizing the case, as the editor had recommended, rather closely home; but, who knows? the man had wit enough—want of heart not of wit was his failing—and perhaps he had reckoned all along on my coming to this conclusion.

I curled my lips with some scorn of his character as this occurred to me, but nevertheless I put pen to paper and made the attempt.

At the end of an hour I had written over several sheets, and there was not one of them which had not been blotted by tears. At the end of a second

hour I gathered up my papers and laid them aside, for I durst go on no longer.

From them I turned to the Bible, and read till a composure spread through my spirit, under the sweet influence of which I retired to sleep, deeply grateful for the opening the day had brought me, and without a trace of the passionate sorrow which a few hours before had caused me so much pain. Having confessed so unscrupulously to its rise, it is but justice to myself to add how utterly transient it was.

There has been a great deal said in all ages about the beauty of the human face divine. It has been a favourite theme with men, and a favourite belief with women, and always will be so. But, for my own part, I hold that they are very imperfect observers as well as philosophers who have not also discovered and pondered upon—its *ugliness*.

The idea is a disagreeable one I know, and yet, abstractedly, we are all of us ready to admit its truth. Everybody enjoys a good caricature of a crowd, for instance, whether it be the crowd of a circus or of a fashionable ball-room—low or high life; but who ever thinks of suggesting that such representations are unnatural; that noses do not really turn up in such a ridiculous manner; that mouths are not really so wide and formless, or stiff and contracted; that people do not really twist their faces into such odd shapes when they speak and laugh, nor look so affected and constrained?

No! what people really say is, that they have seen all the faces hundreds of times before, and that they are done to the life.

If it be thought unfair to draw conclusions from caricatures, let the sceptical reader look into the crowds of real life, and judge from them.

Let him look round the dress-circle of the theatre next time he goes there; or at the people in any of the courts of law—judges, lawyers, prisoners, witnesses, and spectators: or at a gathering together of parsons in a procession, or at a visitation, from the dignitaries downwards: or even at the company seated round a large London dinner-table. And then let him honestly say, whether the utmost skill of millinery art, whether dresses or head-dresses, bands or canonicals, robes or wigs, can redeem these masses of human beings from their cousinship to the crowds of the caricatures. And if I have omitted the race of soldiers from my list, it is not because they are really exempt, but because half their features being hid by hair, any deforming peculiarities they may have are less easily seen. Shave the dragoon officer and turn him into the wine trade, and it is wonderful how like his neighbours he becomes. But, admitting crowds to be what we do admit them to be, (there is no need to particularize, for every one knows the nature of the remarks made upon human masses,) how is it that we are unwilling to acknowledge the ugliness of mankind as a general fact?—a much more general one than that beauty of the human face divine on which we so fondly dwell?

I cannot answer the question. I, perhaps because I had always been accounted so *decidedly plain*, had not scrupled to approach the subject, and had long ago convinced myself that the amount of human ugliness was amazing, and a striking contrast to the general good looks, so to speak, of the brute creation, after their different kinds.

How anyone can doubt this fact is to me surprising. For what is the crowd, about whom we so readily admit it, but a collection of individualisms? It is not an abstract idea with which you and I have no connection. On the contrary, it is only another set of *yous* and *mes*.

I know very well that exceptions to the rule of general ugliness exist: exceptions rising, in some rare cases, even to the perfection of faultless human beauty; and these do not belong to the *yous* and *mes* of the crowd. But how rare they are is so undeniable that they never can be brought forward in support of a theory. And as to those mixed cases where nature, as it were, makes an apology in one direction for a mistake committed in another—carrying off a defective nose by a pair of exquisite eyes—making good clumsy lips by a dimple in the cheek—compensating for a cold dark complexion by chiselled features, or gracing indifferent features by the tints of the lily and the rose—all I can say is, they especially prove the truth of my statements. There is, to say the least of it, as much ugliness as beauty in the human face divine, even under the most favourable circumstances; those one in a thousand instances

excepted, where neither the scrutiny of the artist nor the rules and measures of art can find a flaw or a fault. And even of them I have often doubted whether they had not their ugly moments, their phases of disgust at the flesh, even to themselves.

It will be said, no doubt, that only a plain person would have come to such conclusions, and this may be true; yet I question if the greater number of those who are admired and considered most attractive can fail to agree with me if they will but shut themselves up with their looking-glasses, and examine themselves closely and dispassionately.

Let each individual make the experiment:—And now, how is it with you, my friend? Are you satisfied that that nose of yours is neither too long nor too short, neither too much turned up nor too much inclined down, bordering neither on the proboscis nor the snub? And if all is well with your nose, have you equal reason to be satisfied with your other features? Is there no approximation to the negro model in the good-natured fulness of your lips, or fear lest the thin compressed line they form is deficient in the necessary amount of curve? If your chin retreats, do you not tremble lest some caricaturist should place you in his very foremost row? Or, if it protrudes, you may pique yourself on firmness of mind, but must for ever give up aspiring to the contour of the Venus.

Be satisfied—for it is needless to push the enquiry further. Be satisfied, that, unless you are fit to sit for the chiselled beau ideal of the sculptor, you bear

about with you some share of that common lot of ugliness which from time to time will break out through all your other advantages, and become visible to your fellow men.

But be satisfied—you are admired, not criticised, by the world which willingly blinds itself to an unpleasant truth. Be satisfied, and let me be satisfied too. Leave me the comforting reflection that I do but possess in excess a lot common to all, and that at any rate we meet on the common ground of our defects. But is this all? Cannot we do more than this? Cannot we meet on some common ground of consolation?

I think you will find that we can, if you will go with me through the rest of my tale.

It will easily be supposed that these which were favourite old theories of mine that had lain dormant in my head for years, were roused into fresh activity by the fact of my being engaged upon a tale of which personal appearance was the theme; and extremely useful I found them. Out of them I constructed the same ingenious defence for my heroine which I have just offered for myself. I suggested that she had but an accidentally undue excess of an evil in which all the race shared, however unwilling they might be to allow it; and would there never come a day I exclaimed, in a fervour of enthusiasm, when Nature herself would furnish a compensation for the ills she had crowded so heavily on one head?

It may possibly be that I wrote this sentence with reference to the early death impending over my

heroine, by which the editor had proposed her rescue from sorrow; for I had by this time been at work for about a fortnight, and had conducted the plain young lady through many a weary year of her life.

But I never quite knew what answer I intended to have given to the question, for I wrote it the last thing one night, and an accident the following day disarranged all my preconceived plans.

Among my belongings was a four-volumed octavo edition of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*, translated into English. They were books I had often amused myself with, but nothing more. They were absolutely crowded with illustrations, and specimens of faces:—silhouettes, fronts, three quarters, and all sorts—exemplifying the author's various theories; and the amusement consisted in studying the illustrations without the text, coming to one's own conclusions upon them, and then referring to Lavater's interpretations, and seeing how far one had been right.

In nine cases out of ten one had been wrong, very often ludicrously and egregiously so. One had taken his particularly stupid men for grave and wise ones, and his ladies of fine taste and delicate sensibility for unmeaning fools. Whether the graver's tool or one's own judgment was in fault was of no consequence; the joke was equally good, and the laugh generally ended by some disparaging remarks on the so-called science of Physiognomy, whether justifiable or not I am not now presuming to say. But certainly if physiognomy was in its infancy in

Lavater's days, there may be a doubt whether it has ever yet shaken off its swaddling-clothes.

Nevertheless Lavater, a learned German physician, a man of science, and also of sincere piety, was not likely to have elaborated such a work without there being in it a great deal worth attention, as I had often reflected : yet somehow or other the day had never come when I had sat down to read and judge for myself.

But often since the subject of the human face divine had been daily forced upon my attention, by my autobiographic labours, I had caught myself wondering whether there were any good general remarks on beauty and ugliness in Lavater's Essays ; and on the morning after I left the unanswered question on my tablets I took down a volume, to run my chance of what I might find in it.

Those German metaphysicians were the most suggestive of all writers I knew, and I had a great curiosity to discover what such a man really thought upon the abstract question of beauty. Who knows what new lights I might not pick up in the old book ?

So, for the first time in my life, I sat down to a volume of Lavater, to see if I could find in it something to learn, instead of something to laugh at—a hint not unworthy the consideration of all readers of books.

Many pages did I turn over, and some I read, containing very interesting remarks and speculations, but nothing exactly to my purpose or avail-

able for the work I had in hand ; when, all at once, as I was tossing over masses of the leaves in succession before putting the book away, which I had resolved to do, I caught sight of something about *the faces of the dead*, and, although that had nothing to do with my tale or the search I had been making, my attention was irresistibly arrested.

The chapter was divided into long paragraphs—subdivisions perhaps they ought to be called ; and the first two or three treated of the extraordinary likenesses which the author had observed both in newly-born and dead infants to their parents.

The account was a singular one, and I read every word of it, and, thus incited, proceeded to the next paragraphs with avidity. They ran as follows, and I give them at length, because I do not think words of mine would express their meaning half as well :—*

“ As often as I have seen dead persons, so often have I made an observation which has never deceived me ; that after a short interval of sixteen or twenty-four hours, sometimes even sooner, according to the malady which preceded death, the design of the physiognomy comes out more, and the features become infinitely more beautiful than they had been during life: they acquire more precision and proportion, you may perceive in them more harmony and homogeneity, they appear more noble and sublime.

“ Has not every one of us, I have often reflected in silence, a primitive physiognomy, the origin and

* “ Lavater’s Physiognomy,” vol. iv. page 149.

essence of which must be divine? Must not this fundamental physiognomy have been disturbed, and, if I may be allowed the expression, submerged by the flux and reflux of events and passions? And may it not gradually re-establish itself in the calm of death, as muddy water works itself clear when it is no longer stirred?" * * *

" I have likewise had frequent occasion to attend the dying ; I have seen some of them whose faces had always appeared to me ignoble, expressing neither elevation of mind nor greatness of character. A few hours, and, in some instances, a few moments before death, their physiognomies became visibly ennobled. Colour, design, expression, all was changed. A celestial morning was beginning to dawn ! Another state of existence was at hand ! The most inattentive observer was constrained to submit to evidence ; the hardest heart to give way to feeling ; the most sceptical spirit to embrace the faith. Immortality seemed to burst through the clouds of mortality ; a ray of the divine image dissipated the horrors of dissolution.—I turned aside my head, and adored in silence. Yes, the glory of God is still made manifest in the weakest, in the most imperfect of men !" * * *

The reader of these pages has, no doubt, already decided that the writer of them is of both an irritable and emotional temperament. I dispute it not. Let him judge then of the tide that swept through my very soul as line after line of these passages became clear to me.

A whole mine of consolation and triumph seemed to open before me, and I went on to conclusions which Lavater certainly never committed to paper even if they crossed his mind.

This divine primitive physiognomy, which had so strong a tendency to become clear in death, was it not destined to become a thousandfold clearer still in the glorified state after which we all aspire?

Was it not with this divine primitive physiognomy, perfectly developed and unburdened by the infirmities of the individualism of the clay, that Moses and Elias were recognized as such by the apostles in the transfiguration on the mount?

Might not also the existence of this divine primitive physiognomy be the cause why, as our deepest modern thinker has observed, the faces of babies are like the faces of infant Gods, laden with a grandeur of promise, which is never fulfilled in the appearance of the grown-up man? And why, but that in the grown-up man the divinity is, as Lavater expresses it, "submerged by the flux and reflux of events and passions"—overclouded, in some cases, alas! distorted, into the Satanic type.

But then; might not this divine primitive physiognomy be brought out and become more and more traceable even during life, provided the divine of the soul be cultivated, and cherished, and made to rule over the influences of the Evil One?

What a sheet-anchor of ennobling hope to all such perplexing cases as mine! What a warning lesson to those who, with natural beauty of feature,

do not take heed to the trimming of the lamp of the soul! What a light upon the otherwise unaccountable power of what we call *expression*, as contrasted with mere regularity of form!

In extreme cases we have all of us an intuitive persuasion of the face becoming gradually responsive, as men grow in years and acquire fixed character, to the secrets and habits of the heart.

What artist would give the gloomy eye and sullen mouth of Judas to St. John; or the serene brow, which we all ascribe to the apostle of gentleness and love, to the traitorous betrayer of our Lord?

Let us then believe that the rule, which is forced upon our conviction in great cases, must be equally true in small ones. That the Spirit of darkness is at war with the Spirit divine, even for the possession of our earthly tabernacle. That the one would fain de-face what the other would fain exalt; and that if we resist the evil and cleave to the good, the divine primitive physiognomy, our particular individual share of the image of God, our birthright from the first moment of our existence, the full perfection of which we look forward to in the glorified state hereafter, will shine through the most imperfect clay in life itself, as it is known to do in the hour preceding dissolution! . . .

As these thoughts passed in succession through my brain, a flush of joy came over me at all I foresaw for my tale, and I sprang up from my chair as I had sprung up on that eventful evening of trouble: and now, as then, I stretched out my arm to the

doorway, as if the editor had but just passed through it,—but in what a different state of feeling,—and exclaimed, in a smothered outburst of triumph:—“ There *is* a moral after all; there *shall* be a moral in spite of you, you metaphysical old Scotch wise-acre! And *such* a moral! Such a moral as you, in your petty philosophy of a plain woman, becoming interesting only by an early death, never had a vision of! The best thing *you* could devise was, that she should lay down the imperfect earthly tabernacle as an unworthy clog, a thing well rid of and done with. *I* will teach her that that imperfect earthly tabernacle is not to be despised; that it contains within it the germ of what is divine; and that by the patience and long-suffering of a holy life the divine primitive physiognomy, which is the outward form of the spiritually divine, shall shine through the wretched misshapen clay till there becomes visible, even to mortal eyes, a ray of divine beauty itself.”

It was some time before I could sufficiently compose my thoughts to turn to my day's work, but when I did so the task was absolutely delightful.

I had no occasion to disturb the plot of the autobiography as far as it had gone, for it was constructed journal-wise, from the date of its beginning during illness; reverting therefore over the whole of my heroine's bygone life, as a history. And it did very well,—particularly well, indeed, for my new views, after I had struck out a few allusions to the early death the poor young lady was anticipating.

Of course, I had given up all idea of killing her now; but nothing could be more convenient and natural than that she should be writing these memoirs during a fit of lingering sickness, the recovery from a fever we will suppose, as an occupation to while away time.

I had made her the only child of a very beautiful mother, to whom the fact of her daughter's plainness had been one of those bitter disappointments which come as a visitation for life.

By this I had thrown an additional trouble upon the girl herself; for, besides the mortifications she experienced in the world, she had had to contend with the daily, lifelong pain of knowing herself to be an eyesore to the one being who ought to have supported and comforted her.

And I had made her, while penning the painful record of her sufferings, please herself with a vague hope, that, should it ever fall under her mother's eye, a feeling of tender pity towards her might be awakened.

Such was the very simple and unpretending plot upon which I had tacked a full, true, and minutely detailed account of all the trials to which an individual so circumstanced, and of the fine character and disposition the editor had insisted upon, was sure to be subjected; and having drawn from the life, I had no fears for the impressiveness of the portrait.

But now for the continuance of the autobiography. I must not journalize, as I had intended, the gradual

increase of her malady, and the conflicting emotions and thoughts consequent thereupon.

Nor must I leave on my pages the now unmeaning question with which I had left off writing the night before:—*Would there never come a day when nature herself would furnish a compensation for the ills she had crowded so heavily on one head?*

It was not from nature, but from the Lord of nature, that I now saw the remedy must come. Not in death that the deliverance was to be sought, but in the life eternal, the knowledge of the Father and the Son, which flows as a regenerating fountain through the whole being, both body and soul, of the Christian believer.

Even while I was erasing the question, an incident arose to my mind which facilitated the bringing in my late discoveries in a quite natural manner.

I made my heroine describe her mother as bringing her one day from the library a beautiful copy of Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy to look over; a gift, as she told her, of one of her early admirers.

I made the daughter relate with what interest, when left alone with the book, she turned over its pages; now and then amused, now and then anxious; by degrees curiously searching for some specimens of plainness like her own, feverishly trying to discover what hidden evil or defect lay beneath it. Furthermore, I pictured her coming suddenly upon those singular speculations in the two passages lately quoted; after which the road was plain and easy enough, for I had but to make her feel what I had

felt myself, and to add the conclusions I had added to the theory of the divine primitive physiognomy. And as I wrote a new illustration suggested itself, valuable even beyond all I had thought of before.

I had suggested that it was the divine primitive physiognomy which became visible to mortal eyes in Moses and Elias during their transfigured state. But this was in the one case the transfiguration of the dead, and in the other that of a being who had passed in a miraculous manner from earth to heaven. The one man had gone through the gates of the grave, and had laid aside the corruptible flesh; the other had undergone the great change by a special miracle. Neither case bore upon common life as it now is.

But it was otherwise with the first martyr, Stephen, when he was brought up and accused by false witnesses before the Sanhedrim. He was in the flesh: a common living breathing man, when, "All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, *saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*" What was this, what could this have been, but that the divine primitive physiognomy, illuminated by the divine of the soul, had triumphed altogether over the imperfections of the fleshly tabernacle, and the living man had stood before his earthly judges, as he will stand hereafter before God, at the resurrection of the just, the first resurrection, "*his face as the face of an angel?*"

It will easily be imagined what a subject this was for me to work upon in my tale. As I had pre-

viously painted my heroine's sorrows, so now I pictured her joys, when this daylight of a new hope broke around her. I described her resolving never again to waste either time or feeling upon vain regrets over personal defects, but to nourish the divine of the soul, which had power to burst through and triumph over all. True, it would never do so miraculously, in her case, during life, as it had done in Stephen's, but to some extent it was sure to avail, and there would be the fulness of hope reserved for hereafter.

I proceeded now to make irregular breaks, sometimes of a week's, sometimes of a month's duration, in the journal, during which I supposed my heroine's struggles with herself to continue. At last I made her commemorate a remark which had one day, long afterwards, fallen from her mother, to the effect that she looked *almost well*; those words having no reference to her state of health, which had been gradually re-established, but to a beautiful woman's idea of looking well, i. e. looking well-looking!

She had come in, on that occasion, happy, after some active exertion to some good end, elated with a little accidental success, serene in purity of intention, and her mother at last had said she looked *almost well*, and had smiled upon her with a sort of pleased surprise: she had smiled on her mother in return, and then left her to be alone and think; to rejoice,—to wonder whether the day would ever come when, if she might by the grace of God purify herself from demoniacal influences, from uncontrolled

temper, impatient envyings, unruly passions, she should ever but no ! she would not speculate nor bargain with hidden decrees. ' The object of overcoming personal ugliness had insensibly become quite secondary in her mind !

Now I hope none of my readers will quarrel with me for ever having made it to have been first. Young people are by no means always led to what is good by severe doctrinal truths and convictions of the rightness and religious necessity of such and such a course of life. There are times and seasons, phases of the soul, in which we cannot and will not listen to such arguments, or, if listening, remain as callous and insensible to them as the grey rock upon the moor-side is to both the sunshine and the storm. We hate to be convinced, we refuse to be melted, and they are fools who would drive against us in those periods of existence, until they rouse up indifference into a loathing both of teacher and teaching.

How often, on the contrary, in the pursuit of some little youthful aspiration, some fanciful dream, in which neither absolute right nor wrong seem to be involved, the tender Shepherd of the sheep permits us to come unexpectedly upon the pathway we have so long shunned, the still waters from which we have so often turned away in obstinate disgust !

I continued the journal in the same fashion for some time, imagining the young lady to make an entry in it whenever anything unusual or interesting, whether in incident or thought, arose ; and by a little ingenuity I contrived to let it be known that

her father was the owner of a small estate, entailed upon male heirs, that he was considerably older than her beautiful mother, and one of an old-fashioned race of squires, who stuck to the least-trouble plan with the most stolid obstinacy, and endeavoured to defend by argument what he was inclined to from indifference and want of the virtue of energy; looking down upon what he called improvement-mongers as childish visionaries, who took a great deal of trouble for what brought them no thanks.

After which it was not difficult to make clear how that my young lady, looking round her in life for occasions and opportunities of good, found plenty to do without stirring from home. She had, it is true, no great fancy for the school-teaching work, which has for years been the approved outlet of exertion in such cases; but there is plenty of other good to be done besides that, and she accomplished even that in her own way, by persuading her father to allow proper teachers to be appointed and paid, and seeing that they did their work to real purpose.

Her father, always liberal of money to her, and becoming more and more averse to trouble as time went on, was always willing to put himself in his daughter's hands when she wished it; and thus under her direction alterations for the better did begin to arise both in the village, and farms, and tone of the tenantry; and because they had been accomplished without fuss, the old gentleman was rather pleased than otherwise when his daughter would now and then induce him to ride with her to some little dis-

tance to see how nicely what she called one of her whims was answering.

She called them so because in that light her father was ever willing to accept all she proposed and did with pleasure: the one thing in his life he had always insisted upon, having been that his daughter's private wishes should, whenever possible, be gratified. He could not leave her the estate, he used to say; nor could he give her beauty; (here he would shake his head and wish his wife did not care so much about such things;) so he would do what he could. He would indulge her in all the fancies she could devise, so that she might have something to make her happy.

I think my readers will now quite understand how in my tale I filled up the particulars of this sketch, by entries describing her efforts and their success, her pleasure in them, her pleasure in having drawn her father so gently into her views, and the overflowing comfort she now experienced in a life where she could once see only dreariness and disappointment. But at last came an entry which announced the breaking up of the pleasant dream;—her father had suddenly died. Her overwhelmed mother would not be comforted. The scene would soon be realized:—

“The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.”

There had been no friendly intercourse between the two, for the present man had been abroad as a diplomatist for some years; between his father and her father some disagreement had arisen, and the former too was but lately dead.

Presently the journal recorded the arrival of this young man, a severe serious person, but certainly not on the whole uncourteous.

Another short interval, and then it was declared that his intentions must certainly be kind. He had heard how much interest she had taken in the estate, had asked her to show him all she had done, and more, all she wished to have done had the estate been hers, and had quite given her to understand that what she had proposed should be strictly carried out. Then there was a considerable interval again. And then a sentence carefully dated as the rest, but amounting in reality to a prayer—the outpourings of a distracted mind, imploring to be preserved from some weakness, some calamity, some sin. Entreating to be strengthened against the indulgence of visions which had nothing to justify them, which had no connection with that course of life which it was so clear Providence had appointed for *her*.

As if any of us can ever presume to say what course of life is appointed for us, when the stream may turn in a new direction on the morrow!

And now the journal was continued regularly, for she seemed to have made use of it as a means of self-examination and confession.

Her mother had been grieving bitterly over leaving the old place, grumbling at it almost as a wrong—what could she do to console her? For herself she felt sure that—she being willing to sacrifice her life to do what good she could—God would provide her with some opportunity. For the present she must

soothe and divert the thoughts of the parent that was left. They were so well off too, there was really no just cause for trouble !

A fortnight later and her mother had written about a house in a distant county, and she was full of curiosity as to the locality. But this entry, like so many others that preceded it, did not end without a few bitter expressions of self-regret and earnest ejaculations for help to resist temptation.

And for several more days nothing but some brief fervent words to the same purpose was inserted.

But at last came an entry which opened with the declaration that the writer could scarcely yet believe what she had to record. The "hard heir" had brought her their letters that morning, and there was an answer to the enquiry about the house. They could have it, and immediately. The mother had read the announcement aloud, in a voice broken by painful emotion. The young man had coloured to the temples, and then asked *her* to come out and speak to him alone. Hating herself, as she described it, for the emotion this simple request excited in her, steeling herself against some secret weakness by a prayer to be kept by God's right hand from folly, she had complied ; and then heard what she could scarcely yet believe, what still seemed unreal and impossible to her, what every now and then she fancied must pass off from her life as the vapours pass off from the summits of the hills—namely, that she was loved. He—he—who had for the last few weeks of her life been creeping, in spite of earnest

counter-struggles, into her heart as the beau ideal of all that could be desired in a human being, had told her that if the deepest admiration, the tenderest affection, and the strongest desire to join with her in all the best aspirations of her life, could avail to win her, he implored her in mercy to try and return his love ! Adding hurriedly, as if to secure her by a motive she could not resist, that, if she would but listen to him, her mother need not leave the old place she loved so much,—could live in that beautiful cottage in the park, which could so easily be enlarged and made a little mansion of. For *her* sake perhaps . . . oh, how could he ever have been so blind—but thank goodness he was!—as to suppose she needed the motive of pleasing her mother for returning his love ! But this entry too did not close without an appeal to the Giver of all good, only now it went up as the voice of praise and thanksgiving.

The paragraph of the next day announced “ a curious incident.” Her mother had owned to having expressed to the hard heir himself the utmost surprise at his choice. She said she had always set her daughter down as unmarriageable with that plain face, or only likely to attract some quiet country curate or doctor who was not very particular.

To which the hard heir had made answer that he had once in his life, for a few months, passionately loved a beautiful face, in the common acceptation of the term, but that before they were even engaged the glances of evil had shone through it from within, and that having expostulated in vain, he had bidden

her adieu, and told her why,—“Whereas,” added he, in conclusion, “often and often, in moments when your daughter’s feelings and energies have been aroused, her face has been to me as the face of an angel!” . . .

And here, at last, ended the autobiographic journal; for the next entry was in the handwriting of the mother. It opened with a full date, and the announcement of her daughter’s marriage. It went on to describe herself as having accidentally seen the manuscript, and obtained permission to read it.

It added that she felt herself deeply to blame. And now how wonderful, how thankworthy, that the thing she had looked upon as the greatest misfortune of her life—that daughter’s plainness—should, by the mercy of God, have become the means of her own enlightenment! Under what wild delusions and selfishness had she not lived! How cruelly ignorant of all her daughter had felt and suffered! But she would devote herself, henceforth and for the rest of her life, to making amends to her child, and striving for higher and holier views herself.

She had shed many repentant tears over the MS. and would not rest till it was published, as a comfort to one half the world and a warning to the other. . . .

—Io Pæan! I had finished!—I drew a dash with a long curled tail to it all down and over the remainder of the sheet, and then threw down my pen and jumped up to *rest*.

For, truth to say, I had worked for a number of

hours with scarcely a five minutes' interval. From an early dinner to now, past tea time, had I sat scribbling the *dénouement* of my autobiography. There stood the untouched tea things in the tray on the table. The kettle on the dog by the fire had ceased to boil, for the fire had ceased to burn, and my brain was beginning to feel compressed from excitement and want of a change of position.

I took one turn across the room, then came back to the table, looked at my manuscript, and burst into a laugh which ended in something between a laugh and a cry. Why! I had not only got a *moral* out of the story, in the teeth of the old editor's negative, but I had *married* my heroine instead of killing her!

I was wild with amusement and delight. A moral and a marriage both! Both! in spite of those aphorisms about plain young women which the editor had enunciated in that very room. And as I recalled them I laughed more heartily than ever at the contrast of what he had proposed with what I had done.

At which most inopportune moment, my little damsel abruptly opened the door, and announced—the editor himself!

Anyone who has been caught spouting poetry in an open field, in a fit of blissful enthusiasm, by some unexpected listener round the hedge, who must have heard every word of the sonorous rhapsody, will be able to form a good idea of the silly confusion I experienced at this unlooked for apparition of my friend

To do him justice, he looked as awkward and as much ashamed as I felt; as delicate-minded people always do when they have involuntarily convicted another of a folly or a sin; and seeing this, I recovered myself at once, for what, after all, was there to be ashamed of?

So I smiled and said I lived so much alone, that, unless I varied my moods even to myself, I should stagnate altogether—an explanation which seemed perfectly satisfactory to the editor, for he looked quite himself again immediately, and answered, that he knew the feelings only sadly too well; after which, I offered him the easy-chair by the fire-place, and we sat down.

“Well?” said he, enquiringly, “and now how is our heroine going on? I was passing, and have called to ask after her.”

“She is much obliged to you,” cried I, my joyful elation returning at once, at the mere recollection of the completed tale; “I have finished her this very evening, which was the cause of your finding me in such a state of absurd hilarity.”

I was certainly fated to make the poor man look surprised; but when he did so now, it never occurred to me that he might well wonder at the conclusion of a death-bed scene having had so enlivening an effect.

He made no reply to my observation however, so I went on, just for the sake of saying something.

“I dare say you are so used to these things, you are quite hardened, and think nothing of bringing a tale to an end. But I have not written long enough

to have attained to that perfection of indifference. I am still like those actresses who go through all the emotions they represent, and faint in good earnest after performing the 'Stranger.' I cannot help feeling every inch of the ground I go along!"

Of course, this speech puzzled my friend still more; but it evidently amused him also, for a most comical smile stole over his face as he observed in reply:—

"It was an odd result, too, of an act of wilful, premeditated murder. I thought I heard you laughing?"

I certainly laughed now at the cross purposes we were at, but the joke was too good to be given up at once.

"I have *not* committed a murder," was my answer, shaking my head to negative the idea still further.

"No, no! Of course. A natural death, I know; but you cannot deny, Mrs. Authoress, that you and I planned it together."

"*You*, not *I*," cried I, scarcely able to get the words out gravely.

"Well, we will not quarrel about trifles. You have finished the story, and the lady is dead, I suppose."

"No, she is not!"

"Not dead?"

"No, married instead!"

"*Married*? I thought we had settled that was impossible."

"*You* did, not I; but you gave me *carte blanche*

to do as I pleased with the poor thing, so I ventured to marry her after all."

"I remember! And you were quite right to follow your own course: that is, provided you have brought it about naturally, and have not offended probabilities?"

He said this in an enquiring tone.

"I never troubled myself about probabilities," exclaimed I. "I wrote what came into my head."

"A very excellent plan, when a writer is sure of himself, and there is no fear of his being carried away too much by his feelings at the expense of his judgment!"

I began to be vexed at the misgivings he evidently entertained of the judiciousness of my choice. But on second thought I *knew* I was right, and could afford to be doubted.

"It is ridiculous for me," said I, "to be defending my own cause, when you will have to judge about it for yourself directly. I will send you the manuscript to-morrow."

"Will you not let me look at it now?"

I felt my heart beat with delight at the idea, but a feeling I cannot explain prevented my complying with the proposal. Perhaps, in spite of myself, I entertained some fears. If he were to read it before my eyes and be delighted, what a triumph! but if otherwise—yes! I must have been half afraid, for I could not face the agitation of suspense I knew I should have to go through; so I told him that as the latter part had not even been re-read, and wanted

verbal corrections, I would not put so imperfect a production into his hands.

He looked disappointed, but said no more on the subject; then asked, glancing at the tea-tray, if he were interrupting me? on which I could do no other than ask him if he would care to have a cup of tea with me, informing him of the long fast I had been keeping over the tale, and apologizing for the cold and comfortless state of the room.

I expected that my offer would have been a signal for his departure, but, on the contrary, he accepted what I proposed without a moment's hesitation, put away his hat as if it was not likely to be wanted for hours, and seemed inclined to make himself thoroughly comfortable.

I scarcely knew whether to be pleased or vexed, for I could think of nothing but the tale, and was longing to get back to it, for corrections and re-reading. Still it was complimentary in my friend to be so glad to stay, and I soon had the fire relit, the kettle restored to its boiling state, and warmth and light diffused through the room.

Very little more was said about the manuscript; but his tone and manner became so kind and friendly, now that we talked on general subjects, that I was on the point more than once of risking my fate and putting the tale into his hands. And oh! how I regretted for days afterwards that I had not done so! But a something held me back which I could not overcome. The story was, or certainly had been to me, a very affecting one. In it I had laid bare the

sad long-hidden secrets of my own heart, and perhaps I shrank from being present when they were exposed to the sight of another. Not that he would know them for mine. No! I had so turned the history part in another direction, that that was impossible. Still, I knew whence it had all come myself, and could not help feeling guilty. It was, therefore, out of the question to let him go through it in my very presence! Just once in the course of the evening the editor enquired if I had carried out the detail of the heroine's sufferings as he had suggested, and I assured him I had, and took that opportunity of saying seriously that I hoped he would not be dissatisfied with the change I had made in the *dénouement*, when he read the tale!

“ I have no idea of such a thing,” was his reply. “ I cannot fancy you condescending to paint any thing forced and strained. Nay, I suspect that any hero and heroine might consider themselves fortunate to have their destiny placed in your hands.”

It was with these words he got up to go. But I had yet a favour to beg of him. My manuscript was to be sent in on the following day, and I asked him, though I did it reluctantly, to put me out of my misery as soon as he could, apologizing for the anxiety and distrust of myself, which always harassed me on these occasions.

“ You may confidently rely upon me,” was his kind answer. “ If I do not come myself to-morrow evening, you shall hear from me without fail. Not that I admit there is the slightest reason for your

misgivings. Half an hour over it here would have satisfied both yourself and me, but you denied me the favour, remember !”

Saying which he shook hands and departed.

For a moment I felt inclined to call him back and learn his decision ; but no ! I could not face it, and the next instant it was too late, for I had heard the street door shut behind him.

The manuscript was dispatched early in the morning to its destination by a hand I could depend upon, and I passed the day as best I could ; going out for some hours into the neighbouring park and endeavouring to school myself for whichever decision the editor might come to. To shake off all thought of the matter was impossible, and the next best thing was to prepare myself for the worst. The worst, however, had a resource in my imagination ; for while trembling with fear at one moment I was so firm in self-confidence at the next, that I resolved, should the Scotch editor fail me, to apply to several other periodicals with the offer of the tale before I despaired about it. Surely somebody would find out its merits !

And thus the day wore away, and before evening I amused myself by trimming up the room and preparing for the visit I so anxiously expected. I had even made some little choice marketings in case my friendly judge should like to stay to tea.

But six, seven, eight, nine, and ten o'clock struck, and neither editor nor letter came, and this harass, following upon some weeks of literary excitement, made me feel absolutely ill.

Of course, my conviction from time to time was that he had found my effort such an intolerable mass of nonsense, that he actually dared not give his opinion in writing, but wished me to understand his complete negative from his silence.

But the very next minute I had a thousand arguments to prove this impossible. In the first place he was a gentleman; and such a proceeding as allowing things to go by default, was not the conduct of a gentleman. In the second place he had promised; he had said I might rely confidently upon him, either to come or send.

Well! but here was the promise broken by some means or other—there was no denying that.

Then it struck me, should I send a messenger to him and deliberately demand an answer? What a piece of intrusive impertinence! Besides it was far too late.

In short, there was nothing for it but submitting and going to bed; but I think I never felt the friendlessness and loneliness of my position half so keenly as that night; distracted and kept awake by a variety of wild conjectures which I could neither lull nor be indifferent to.

I slept however, at last, but when I re-awoke I found that I was so completely prostrated as to be unable to rise.

Violent headache came on from the overstrain of the brain, and I had no power of troubling myself about anything. To lie in bed and remain undis-

turbed was the summit of my ambition, "Let come what come may," the refrain of all my thoughts.

I roused painfully enough indeed, at the post hour, but when my little damsel came to tell me the man had passed, and there were no letters, I laid down my weary head and resolved to disturb myself no further.

She had seen me ill before, if not so violently so, knew what to administer, and was aware of the intense quiet necessary for my restoration, and, therefore, did not trouble me in any way.

But late in the afternoon, the oppression which was weighing me down, seemed to lighten a little, and I got up. It might be, too, that there was the hope in my mind that this second evening would surely explain the neglect of the first; but I was mistaken. Neither editor nor letter came.

My head continued relieved, however, and a long crying fit seemed to have almost soothed my feelings to a calm, and taken away the edge of irritable impatience. I had argued with myself that little as well as great things were overruled, and it was miserable to be overpowered by a slight rebuff of fortune.

And so another night passed, and on the morning which followed, I certainly had recovered both judgment and hope. Life was life, and the failure of one attempt in literature was surely not a matter to go into the depths of despair about. I had other masters besides this Scotch editor:—people who could be relied upon, if they were less able to help

me, and who, at any rate, gave me no trouble, and took in good part whatever I sent.

Then, again, as to losing the man as a friend, what could it signify to me in the long run? From the first application about this tale, he had not betrayed any very delicate appreciation of my feelings;—quite the contrary;—and this protracted silence was utterly inexcusable.

No! I would not attempt to deceive myself. I was at present a worker, a mere worker, and the less I thought about making friends, and having pleasant associates, about any domestic comforts in fact, the better.

They would come in God's good time if it was His will they should come, and if it was not, I must be content to pass through life without them.

And so I dressed and went about my daily business as I was wont; grave, and sad, and a little anxious still, it may be, but quite composed to all appearance. The post hour passed as before without letter or notice, but now when that circumstance forced me upon conjecturing again, I was seized with a sudden idea—how much I wished I had my manuscript safely back.

The more I thought of this, the stronger hold it took upon me. What could the editor want with it, why should he presume to keep it, if it was not worth his using? Surely it was incredible that he should have flung it into his Balaam box? Or perhaps he actually had, and had forgotten both it

and me in much more important business, as I had no doubt he would consider everything else !

This was really distracting to contemplate ; and my newly-recovered calm was fast departing, when a quite opposite but equally annoying suggestion came into my head.

What if he should be no better than a bankrupt Scotch adventurer, come up to London to batten on the wits of others ? What if his magazine were on the point of failing, and he had wormed a tale, which he knew would be extremely clever, out of me, for the purpose of making money by it elsewhere, perhaps selling it to friends in America ? And even if this had not been planned beforehand, might not the extraordinary talent and power of the story have put the wicked means of making a fortune into his head ?

“ If I only had my manuscript safely back ! ” was the conclusion I came to equally, from both these contradictory conjectures.

Once in possession of the precious document, I should thankfully wipe my hands of the Scotch editor altogether. People seldom left their own country for any good purpose !

My readers will I hope forgive me when I assure them that I have only repeated a quarter of the nonsense that came into my head during these days of sad suspense.

But now anxiety about the fate of the manuscript overpowered every other idea, and before the afternoon came, I had resolved on a proceeding which

I revolted from, yet felt myself forced to in self-defence.

I would call on the editor myself;—inform him that I quite understood my fate from his silence, but demand the restoration of my papers, and in fact, not leave the house until I had recovered them!

And, accordingly, on this errand I in due time set off, although nature and the habits of my life made hateful to me every step that I took. But I endeavoured to persuade myself that having no one to rely upon but myself, and my cause being just, I could not be making any very great mistake.

Arriving at the house in this state of mind, however, the reader will judge of the revulsion I experienced when the woman who answered my summons to the door, informed me that her master had gone off quite suddenly two evenings ago. She believed down into Scotland somewhere, but she could not say where. That he had not said when he should return; but ordered that no letters should be sent after him.

I was thunderstruck. Had he really gone away for good, and with my manuscript, to use it to the base purpose I had conjectured? It was a compliment to the merits of my writing, but something must be done to stop this dishonesty.—*I* must not be sacrificed!

Yet what could be done. No one knew his address, and he had, probably, left nothing but empty boxes to liquidate his rent and household expenses.

I stood transfixed for a few moments, looking, I

suppose, the picture of bewilderment and distress, for the good woman of the house, after a pitying glance at me, asked me if I would walk into the parlour and rest for a few minutes—I seemed but poorly—an offer which I accepted, for I wanted to think.

Common sense was whispering in my ear pretty loudly, that all these notions of mine were the nonsensical chimæras produced by a far too impatient spirit; and then when I once did find myself in the parlour, it looked so respectable!—not a bit as if an adventurer had just cut off from it—that I began to feel quite ashamed of myself.

And presently a very common-place solution of the whole affair suggested itself. As he had gone away so suddenly, and probably on business, the omission of writing might have been a pure act of haste and forgetfulness, instead of a wilful neglect, or, might he not perhaps have written, and the letter being left to the memory of the servants, by some accident have been forgotten?

Here was actually a tiny twig of fresh hope, and I put the case modestly but impressively to this woman—the editor's housekeeper, no doubt.

I told her that I had expected to either see or hear from Mr. —, without fail, on the evening of the day he must have left home. That he had promised me so, and I was sure some accident must have occurred to prevent it. He had papers of mine—valuable papers—I ventured to add (well! they were so to me!) Did she feel quite certain that he had not left some letter or packet for me, for Miss

——, behind, which had been overlooked?—Such things were so easily overlooked!

The woman heard me to the end very politely, and then rang the bell, saying she would make enquiry. I knew what she meant and thought her perfectly right. She had no business, of course, to leave a stranger in her master's parlour, while she ran off to look for a supposititious letter.

The bell was answered by a young girl who looked far too stupid to be the elder woman's daughter.

Had "Master" given her any letters to take to the post, the day he went away? She thought so, but she wouldn't be sure. Had she taken any to the post after he went? The answer was the same. She thought so, but she wouldn't be sure.

The housekeeper ordered her to "attend to the lady," while she went to master's study to see, and so left me.

I had but little hope, yet, as I had a little, I went through the old story of another ten minute's feverish suspense; at the end of which time the housekeeper re-entered the room smiling, and with something in her hand—something, and that something—a letter!

Do not ridicule me, you who read; who, nursed probably in the lap of luxury, have no conception of what it is to work with all the energies of heart and brain for a ten pound note, and honour and credit besides:—and to be at the end thrown back upon what resources of patience, hope, and money, you

may happen to possess ; your labour wasted, your expectations crushed, your work to begin again.

My head swam as I took the letter from the hand of the housekeeper, and she, satisfied now of my being a *bonâ-fide* acquaintance of “ Master’s,” took her departure, carrying off with her the guilty, careless little girl with her *wouldn’t be quite sures*.

The letter—the long withheld letter ran as follows :—

“ MY DEAR MISS ——,

“ I am telegraphed for to my own country on the death of a relative, at the moment when I should have been with you.

“ The first hasty perusal of your MS. has almost overpowered me. I asked you for a tale to amuse the public, and you have sent me a lesson which has instructed myself.

—“ Bounded by a shallower brain”

is a doctrine respecting the intellectual capabilities of women, which cannot be applied to those who think and feel as you do.

“ Or, perhaps, the most divine of all wisdom is rather an inspiration from the heart, than a conclusion of the brain, and, if so, there is nothing for you to envy in the stronger sex.

“ My return is uncertain ; but as I have only been summoned to the funeral, I hope my absence will not exceed a few days.

“ Most faithfully yours,

“ ——.”

Wisdom? I, wise? In the whole course of my life I had never felt myself such an arrant fool; and what between that reflection and the unutterable delight, after so much unnecessary despair, I burst into a flood of what I really must venture to call comfortable tears.

I knew that I was alone, and perhaps from knowing it, made no effort at self-restraint. I had been self-restraining myself all day long, and was sick of it, so I had a thorough good cry to make amends.

When suddenly there was a hand on the door, which in the next instant opened; and I beheld before me, not only the good-natured housekeeper to whom I could have explained myself quite sufficiently (women have no objection to tears!); but—the returned master of the house himself!

As I stood there, in an agony of vexation, he came up to me with so many expressions of delight, that he seemed not to think of being surprised, which, nevertheless, he had every reason to be at finding me there.

But the moment he caught sight of my distress, his manner changed, and taking me by both hands, whether I would or not, he said very quietly:—

“She told me there was a lady here who had called about a letter she expected. I understand it all. My letter was never forwarded to you.” He glanced at it as it lay on the table wet with my tears. “What you have thought of me meantime, I dare not enquire; I had almost rather not hear. And how very ill you look! Come! you must sit

down for the present, and we will see if I can be as good a tea-maker as yourself."

The cold-hearted Scotchman—the metaphysical old wiseacre—the bankrupt-adventurer—had some kindness in him after all! Nevertheless I was far too sensible of the awkwardness of my position, in being there uninvited, to be really comfortable, and my chief anxiety was, to get away at the first opportunity.

But I tried more than once in vain. My host refused to hear that there could be any cause for hurry, and when he told me that it would save him the trouble of calling on me, if I would listen to one or two things he had to say in connection with the story I had been writing, I felt myself bound to sit down quietly again, and hear him out.

And then he drew from his pocket the manuscript which had caused me such tumults of unreasonable fears. I really felt ashamed to look at it, recalling as it did the wild follies of conjecture I had indulged in for the last three days.

"It is beyond all praise," was the editor's remark, as he placed it on the table, and laid his hand, almost reverentially, upon it.

I knew not what to say or do, but murmured out that I hoped he would give it a place in his magazine.

"If you really wish it, on consideration, I will," was, to my surprise, his answer.

And then I asked what doubt there could be of that? To which enquiry I received no answer, so

that I began to feel a nervous wonder stealing over me ; the more especially when the editor leant forward to me in his chair and said :—

“ Everything depends upon what I am going to say.”

I was silent, and he proceeded to relate briefly that the relative who had just died was a cousin, who had been like an elder brother to him in his boyhood, and that he had now, very unexpectedly to himself, left him heir to his property.

At this point he paused, and I, thinking he was waiting for some remark, congratulated him. What else could I do ?

But, without noticing this, he went on :—

“ When I saw you last, I was a comparatively poor man, struggling in some measure as you are struggling, though further on in the effort, for Fortune and for Fame. I have no need to struggle for either now.”

The mournful gravity with which he uttered these words was so inconsistent with the good news they announced, that I was completely puzzled.

“ I never dreamt that I should have had such substantial comforts to offer to anyone, at least not without many more years of toil and delay. And now that the blessing has come, I have no heart to rejoice in it, unless I can obtain another which I scarcely dare to hope for ! ”

What strange confession was at hand ? I trembled with annoyance as I listened. Was the man mad ? Was he going to make me the *confidante* of

his private feelings, because he thought I could *feel*?

I made a movement to rise and be gone. But he roused himself instantly from his bent position, detained me with one hand, and laying the other once more on the manuscript, exclaimed, still without looking at me:—

“ I would that you would take my fate into your hands, as you have taken that of the heroine of this tale, and make me happy:—is it impossible? ”

A flash of lightning seemed to pass before my eyes as he spoke. Even yet he did not look at me, but the truth had dawned at last, through his words; a truth as incredible as anything my pen had described.

And in the moments of silence which ensued, I, as it were, lived my whole lifetime over at once. Visions passed in succession before me, of my early years and morbid sorrows; of the lonely struggles of my later life: of a home in sight already, brightened into a Paradise by the love of a man to whose soul my own would naturally have knit itself months ago, but for the practical working of that deep-seated humiliation about my personal appearance.

Yes! but for the settled conviction that I was unloveable, I should have been torturing myself about his feelings towards *me*, instead of fretting over his opinion of my writings. All this his unlooked for words revealed to my heart in a few instants of time.

I awoke from my trance to see his arms stretched out towards me, and to hear his voice utter a word I did not know he knew, for I had never signed my name in full, since I had been an orphan and alone.

“ Victoria—let us live out our lives together ! ”

In the next instant I was folded to his heart and shed there the tears which had burst from me at the sound of the long-disused name of love.

“ And you will try to think of me as something else besides the cold dry man of business ? ” were the next words that were spoken between us. “ I never was that to you—never from the first evening I saw you. The tale was only an excuse for coming to your house, and learning to know you better ! ”

“ And I fancied,” I replied, “ that you asked me to write it because you thought me so hideous, and unloveable, and knew what I must have suffered, and took it into your head that I could put it all down on paper if I chose ! ”

That I should ever have lived to tell him this, and to listen to the overflowing answer.

“ My darling, my darling ! I have never seen that you were plain, and I never shall see it as long as I live ! The divine shines too brightly for that ! ”

* * * *

And thus it came to pass that although my autobiographic tale failed to gain me credit with the world, (for we both of us shrank from making its all too life-like revelations public, especially now that I had a position and was known,) it was laid by, as a treasured memorial of the shadows through which

we had passed into the sunlight of a happy married life.

Yet my husband often and often thought it was a pity the teaching of it should be lost to others ; and jokingly asked me, would I never put pen to paper again on the subject ?

And when as a little surprise, and by working when he was not at home, I had thrown together this combined account, and brought it to him for his decision upon its merits, what he said was, “ The double moral and the double marriage ought to do double good ! ”





MY CHILDHOOD IN ART.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I.”

TENNYSON.



WAS a girl of ten years old when I first heard the print-room at the British Museum mentioned, but I remember it as if it was but yesterday. We had gone up to London from our distant country home for a couple of months, and, as it was only the first day after our arrival, the bustle of moving was scarcely over; and I, having no lessons to learn, nor settled occupation to pursue, was sitting in the drawing-room, amusing myself by covering a foolscap sheet of paper with ill-constructed cottages, cabbagy-looking trees, interminable palings, and circular duck-ponds, when an old eccentric friend of the family was announced. I saw my father and mother smile when they heard his name, but he was welcomed cordially by both as he entered the room in a large loose coat, and with a small portfolio under his arm.

It was raining, and the loose coat looked very

wet and uncomfortable, and I thought the poor gentleman seemed very old and infirm, as he slowly followed the servant into the room. But children have very confused ideas of people's ages, and, whatever that of our visitor might be, I soon left off thinking him infirm. He had energy enough for half-a-dozen youths.

He was taking off the cumbersome great coat as my father enquired where he had been; but, accidentally glancing at my villanous attempts at drawing before he gave an answer, he came up to the table and exclaimed:—

“ Ah! we have an artist here, I declare! And how old are you, little one? Ten? Well, ay, and you are my god-daughter, and so I shall answer Papa's question to you, and tell *you* where I have been, and you may tell him afterwards. I have been to the paradise of London—the print-room at the British Museum.”

I stared in astonishment at this strange remark from the, as I thought, odd old gentleman, who now seated himself by me on the sofa; but I did not venture to speak, and he went rambling on.

“ You may well be surprised, little one. I dare say your idea of a London paradise is an overgrown toy-shop. How like she is to you both, Edward! I catch both father and mother as I look at her. And an artist too!—well, then she is going to be like me, I suppose—her poor, unknown old god-father, and may, perhaps, one day think as I do about the print-room at the British Museum being

the only paradise in London. But oh, dear, dear, dear!" and here he drew the unfortunate foolscap to him. "What have we here? Houses with the sun shining on both sides at once; trees without branches, and with stems as thick as mopsticks in proportion to the top; and ponds which only the birds can see. Little girl, listen to me. If you were a bird flying over the pond, and looking down upon it, you would see it round, as you have drawn it; but, as you can only look at it sideways, you never can see it round. And you must always draw things as you *see* them, not as you know they are. Look here now, and tell me what is the shape of this?" and my godfather laid a bright crown-piece on the table.

I laughed as I said "round;" but I spoke enquiringly, for I had not the least idea what the old gentleman meant.

"Round. Yes, of course. It *is* round, that we know, and you *see* it round, because you are looking down over it, like a bird over a pond. But *now*, then, what shape do you see it?" and balancing the crown-piece on his middle finger, he lifted it gradually upwards.

As he raised it, I saw (for I was now looking at it sideways) that it no longer appeared to be round, but egg-shaped, or oval. And, as he lifted it higher and higher, the egg-shape became narrower and narrower, till, when it was raised to the height of my eye, I could see nothing but a straight silver line.

I coloured with surprise, and then laughed, for I

did not know what to say. My godfather, however, did not seem to care about that. He was satisfied when he saw that he had awakened my attention, and made a strong impression; and so he patted my head encouragingly with one hand, while with the other he pushed the crown-piece into mine, saying:—

“Now you have had a practical lesson in perspective, little girl. Don't draw ponds like hoops any more. Try to remember what I have told you. When you look at a round thing sideways, you never *see* it round; and the first rule of sketching is to draw things as you *see* them, not as you know they are. Keep the five shillings to help you to recollect my lesson. Am I not a liberal master, eh?”

Not allowing time for thanks, he walked away to my parents, who had been watching us with amused faces from the fireside, and then they all three sat down and began to talk. I, meanwhile, was almost as much confused as pleased; but after thinking over the matter a little, I ventured on an experiment with the crown-piece myself, balancing it on my finger, and lifting it up to look at it. But it would keep tumbling down, making noisy claps on the rosewood table, and once my mother called out to me to desist, but I heard my godfather stop her.

“Let her alone,” he said. “She thinks there was some jugglery in what I showed her, and she wants to try for herself. The more she looks, the more she'll understand what I've said. Never mind about the noise.”

Thus encouraged, but with more caution than before, I tried the balancing process again and again, till at last I succeeded in lifting the crown-piece gradually to the height of my eye, observing it in all its apparent changes of shape, as I raised and lowered it alternately. After which, beginning to wish that my godfather would come and teach me something else, I directed my attention to the three as they sat by the fire, and wondered what they could be talking about for such a long time. A long and weary time, indeed, it seemed to me, but not to them, for they were going over stories of old times. Sometimes they laughed, sometimes they spoke sadly, and once I saw my godfather lay his hand on my mother's shoulder, and heard him tell her not to grieve, on which she wept very much. And then he added, bending his hand back in the direction of where I was sitting, "Think of the dear one you have left, and then think of me who have lost all."

This sounded very melancholy, and I saw my mother cover her face with her hands for a few seconds till my father spoke; after which the conversation went on as before, while I sat there on the sofa making incoherent marks on the foolscap paper, (for I was afraid of attempting any more drawing,) and mused over the scraps of family-history revelations which now, for the first time, attracted my attention.

A new world seemed to have opened suddenly before me. It is true that I had heard as a mere fact that several of our family had died young, be-

fore I could recollect anything. But though the old nurse, who lived in a village near us, had told me this, and used to shake her head as she spoke of the other little ones, I had never realized them as really belonging to us any more than the Romans and Britons I used to read about. Now, however, my mother's tears, and my godfather's allusion to myself as the dear one that was left, seemed to awaken me to the reality of the lost children having been once among us, my own brothers and sisters; and from this I began to wonder to myself what they had been like, and what they would have been like had they lived till now. And I, too, began to feel some bitterness of regret as the curious wish came across me that the door would suddenly open, and the four (there had been four) dead ones would come in and be with me, and let me kiss them, and welcome them as brothers and sisters.

In this dreamy fancy I lost all consciousness of what was going on. The three still continued by the fire, murmuring over their visions of the past, but I heard nothing of what they said. I forgot even the wonderful fact of my possession of that bright crown-piece, a fortune in my eyes; and finally, on recollecting all at once that the dead can never return to us in this world, I became so sad and so much depressed, that, crossing my arms upon the table, I buried my face in them, and wept, for the first time in my life, from a sense of bereavement.

Presently after, I was aroused by my godfather's voice close to me.

“Hallo! the little artist asleep by her work!” and then drawing one of my arms from under me, he made me raise myself up, when, seeing the tears upon my face, they all thought that I had been crying about my drawing, which I was very sorry for; but it was of no use to tease them with a long explanation. My poor godfather looked very kind, though grave, and, sitting down by me, put his arm affectionately round me, and said:—

“We artists can’t afford to cry over mistakes; they’re not worth crying about. How should you know anything about drawing till you were taught, and they have not had you taught. See now, I have been scolding both Papa and Mamma about it. They tell me they have made you a nice little musician; but they thought nothing about your being so fond of pencils and paper, little girl. Time enough for that; you can learn drawing any day. Come, now cheer up, you shall play me your last new piece, and then I will show you the pretty things I bring from my London paradise.” And as he said this, my godfather smiled, and I smiled too, and went instantly and played him my last new piece; and when at the end he clapped his hands, and cried, “Bravo, little girl!” so that I saw he was really pleased, I jumped down from the music-stool, and running up to him, put my face close to his ear, and whispered, “Now for the things you bring from Paradise.”

I believe I had laid my arm round his shoulders as I spoke. Certainly, in another instant I felt myself folded to his heart in a warm embrace, and it

scarcely seemed to surprise me. From strangers we had at once become friends. The only thing that puzzled me was, that I fancied I felt a tear or two on my hand as he released me, and I certainly heard his voice choke as he spoke to my mother.

“ How quickly time flies, Adela ; and how little one knows about it till recalled by something that measures it to us ! How little I really expected to find in this child a nice, reasonable, intelligent creature of ten years old, though, of course, I knew that amount of time had passed ! I—I declare I do think,” he added more cheerfully, “ if I had dreamt of my little Emily liking to look at drawings with her old godfather, I should have been down at your country place before now. However, we won’t prose any more, for Emily’s sake.”

I was soon by his side on the sofa again, and he opened the portfolio in which he said he kept his pretty things, and which proved to be full of beautiful drawings. And he showed me copies from Claude, and Rembrandt, and Rubens, and even Michael Angelo ; and he told me what great painters these had been, and how that their fame could never die, and that their works were as beautiful now as long hundreds of years ago, when they were first made ; and he added that, although it was their paintings that were most known and talked about, they had all their lives busied themselves in making sketches and drawings from nature ; some highly finished, some bold and rough, some mere little scraps, with not much more work in them than

in my cottage on the foolscap, but so graceful, so true to nature, so full of feeling and sentiment. "Here is one, to show you what I mean," continued my godfather, holding up a little thing with only a bit of acacia-tree in it, a hill, and a delicate distance indistinct with heat.

At my age, and with such ignorance of art, it is not to be supposed that I could appreciate all that my godfather showed me; but in straining myself to look at and admire them, I learned a lesson of veneration, and had a model from henceforth before me for imitation; nor was it possible that even I could look at anything so true to life and nature as those drawings were, without feeling at least the beauty of their reality.

There were lions by Rembrandt which it almost startled me to behold. The liquid eyes and soft paws were given with such power, and yet with, as it seemed, only one or two little touches of brown paint. Beautiful dreamy views, too, there were of Naples, that reminded me of fairy tales and enchanted cities; and, above all, there were scenes in woods by the German masters which delighted me almost more than the others, for I felt as if I could walk in and ramble among the trees.

"Do they let you bring the drawings away to keep?" was my childish enquiry; to which my godfather answered merrily:—

"These are not the real drawings, little girl, only miserable copies of them. But the copies, poor as they are, remind your old godfather of the exquisite

originals, as he sits alone over the evening fire ; and so now you know why I go, whenever the whim takes me, to the print-room where the drawings are kept, and where I look at the grand old things, and make my feeble imitations, and think the place a paradise.”

How I longed to ask to be taken there, but I was not daring enough to venture upon such a request. It seemed, however, as if my godfather suspected what I was thinking of as I looked up at him, for he added :—

“ *You* are too young to go there yet, Emily. They do not like to admit children, for fear of accidents. And, besides, it is such a serious place, I doubt if it would quite suit you. The very men who bring you the huge portfolios of drawings or prints, move about with a stealthy tread, as if to avoid making a noise, and no one in the room presumes to speak in his own natural voice. Everybody softens it to a sort of respectful undertone. Think what a curious place ! And the very way you get into it is mysterious. There is a door on the left-hand side as you go up the staircase to the mummy room ; and by the side of it is a little ivory knob, which you have to draw out. This produces one stroke on a bell, and soon after you hear that, the door begins to open slowly and gradually, and at last, when quite open, you see opposite to you, at the end of a long passage, a tall man, who looks steadily at you, ready to ask you who you are, and what you want, as soon as you come up to him ; and if you

have no business there, he sends you back again. There now, this is as good as a ghost story, isn't it? Well, you must learn and practise drawing for a few years, and so be fit for an introduction; and then your old godfather will be proud to take you under his arm as a British subject worthy of the privileges of the room. Ah, I shall like to see that day, if it is permitted; and if not, little Emily will remember me when she gets there, I know."

I stretched out my arms to my godfather as he concluded, for I felt that I could never forget him as long as I lived, and I did not know how to express it. A hearty hug rewarded my childish love, so suddenly and earnestly awakened, and we parted the most devoted friends!

The impression left on my mind by my godfather's visit and notice of me, could not fail to be a vivid one; and it was all the more so, perhaps, in consequence of the somewhat lonely life I had led up to that period. My father was a literary man, a fine musician, and a recluse. The world called him eccentric, and concluded him to be disqualified for society; but, although he had lived a very quiet life ever since I could remember anything, seeing but few people except old friends from a distance, no one really knew whether this arose from his disliking company, or from the fact that his means were limited, or because my mother's health was but indifferent.

Certain it is that our journey up to London at that

time was an event almost overpowering to me in its importance, and the interview with my godfather still further increased my sensation of wonder and excitement.

How transitory, however, are such impressions, not upon children only, but upon all the world! Events the most unexpected, and which, if anticipated from a distance, would have seemed of enormous magnitude and interest, blend as we come up to them so naturally into daily life, that the edge both of surprise and delight soon wears off.

In the course of less than a week, life had to me reassumed most of its jog-trot ways. I had masters for both music and drawing, it is true, and this was a great novelty; but I got accustomed to them after a very short time, and in another meeting or two had become so used to my kind godfather's peculiarities, that I could talk quite freely and easily to him. His interest in my drawing studies increased in proportion as I advanced and worked hard to make progress; and I always thought the reasoning lesson from him, after mechanical hard work with the master, did me more good than anything the master could say or do.

But the mechanical plodding was necessary too, and I persevered even in the driest details of copying, in the hope of some day becoming worthy of the promised introduction to the print-room.

Our stay in London was prolonged to three months, and at the end of that time I was able to continue the pursuit of drawing at home, by the aid

of good copies; and with the help also of my mother, who, as I now first discovered, had once drawn herself, although she had laid the occupation aside for many years.

When she first took the pencil out of my hand to help me in a copy I was making, and it came out how much she knew and could do, I was astonished beyond description, for she had never joined in any of my godfather's conversations on the subject; and I was just on the point of giving utterance to my surprise, when a glance at her face completely checked me.

There was upon it a certain pain-stricken expression which I had remembered at times all my life long, and which had once been my only idea of my poor mother. It was not till that first day in London that I had ever wondered what it meant; I merely thought that Mamma *was* so, now and then; and I knew that my father used to come and speak softly and tenderly to her when it came on, and they would sometimes leave the room and go out together, or else she would smile, and seem to recover herself with a less effort.

Ah, I could guess now all about it, as I thought. From that eventful morning in London, I had begun to look upon her quite differently from what I had ever done before. I could see now the traces of sorrow and suffering upon her countenance, and only wished I was old enough to be her confidante, and talk to her about the poor little brothers and sisters I had once had. But I concluded, and justly, that

it was the very depth of her yet unextinguished grief that prevented her being able to speak about them to me; and the instant I saw the pang shoot across her face as she was drawing, I jumped at once to the conclusion, that there was some connection between her having laid the pursuit aside and the death of her children.

The painful spell seemed broken, however, after the first effort, and by degrees she got into the habit of coming to my side when I drew, and when I saw her making this effort for my sake, I felt for her a tenderness I did not dare to show.

Even a child's heart is sometimes hard to read. After we got home, and when from time to time my new knowledge of my mother checked my waywardness, and made me more than usually attentive and obedient, she would put her arm round me, kiss me, and say, "What good your London visit has done you, Emily! You are grown so womanly and reasonable; you are becoming quite a comfort to Mamma!"

Ah, there was a deeper cause for the change than the London visit, and how I wished that I could be what she said, indeed! On such occasions, I used to swallow down the tears that were ready to rise at the sight of her pale face, and say to myself that it would surely come to that some day, that, as I grew older, Mamma would trust me more and more, and talk to me at last about her troubles, and then I would try and console her for those we had both lost.

With such thoughts running in my head, it will easily be supposed that one of my greatest objects of interest on returning home was the old nurse of whom I spoke before. Hitherto she had been in my eyes nothing but a good-natured and rather tiresome old woman. But now, how altered were my feelings towards her ! *She* could tell me about my poor brothers and sisters. *She* knew all about my mother's sorrows ; and it was with almost a touch of awe that I knocked for the first time alone, a self-invited guest, at her cottage-door.

Poor old thing ! What a mixture of pleasure and surprise stole over her withered face when she found I was alone, and had come to see her of myself ; and how strange I felt when we took our respective seats on each side of her little fire, on which the kettle was boiling for tea, and neither of us knew what to begin to talk about !

But at last Nurse asked questions about what I had seen in London, and said how much I was grown, and how steady I looked, and how glad she was Mamma had trusted me to walk so far alone to see her ; and then she asked what I liked best of all I had seen in London, on which I blundered out, " My godfather," which startled her not a little ; but suddenly appearing to recollect herself, she exclaimed :—

" Ah, dear me, I know, now, Mr. Darcy, you mean ; and such a nice gentleman he was before his troubles came."

" What troubles ?" I asked hastily ; and then I

heard that my godfather had once had a lovely and charming wife, as lovely and charming as my own mother had been when *she* was young—"God bless her!" added Nurse, and three as sweet little babes as ever saw the light. But a fever came into the neighbourhood where they lived, and took first one, and then another, till they all went, and my poor godfather was left alone.

I was shocked enough by this sad story; but, feverishly anxious to obtain information about our own family tragedy, I sat dreading, yet longing to ask about it, with a face flushed and distressed, when Nurse, mistaking what she saw for grief about Mr. Darcy, said:—

"Eh, Miss Emily, don't fret about Mr. Darcy. It don't matter how soon a body goes, if they're well prepared, and that poor lady was; and as to the little innocents, they had only been born on purpose to go to Heaven."

"Oh, Nurse——." I got as far as that, and then could not speak another word.

"What is it, Miss Emily? Dear, dear, don't take on so. Your Mamma will think me a very foolish old body if she finds I have been telling you stories that make you cry."

"It isn't that, Nurse," I murmured, with a husky voice.

"Oh, Miss Emily, then what is it? *You've* got nothing to trouble you, I'm sure."

"It's all about my poor little brothers and sisters," I now burst out at once, crying and speaking to—

gether. "I wish they had lived, Nurse; oh, I wish they were alive!" and my tears streamed afresh at giving utterance to the idea. And then I added that I had heard my godfather talking about them in London; and now I knew what made Mamma look unhappy so often; and I was so sorry for her I did not know what to do.

"If you are sorry for her really, you will soon know what to do, Miss Emily," said Nurse, laying her hand on my arm. "Be a double blessing to her yourself, Miss: that's the plan. It'll be no comfort to her to see you fretting about them that's gone, and that you never knew, while there's her and your Papa alive that you *do* know, to be fond of, and do your duty to."

It was well for me that I had opened my heart first to this simple-hearted woman, who in all God's providences read a call to some particular duty, and by her stern right-mindedness checked the too sickly fancies of my imagination.

After a few seconds she spoke again, but in a softer tone.

"No, Miss Emily, you must not fret for them;" (the tears were running fast down her own cheeks, though;) "they're better off than even you, with your kind Papa and Mamma to love you; and as for your dear Mamma, follow her example, Miss Emily. It may have been through a deal of sorrow, it's true, but she did bow patiently to the will of God, even when it seemed most against her feelings. And that's what we all of us must do if we hope to

please Him. And as you have been the only one that's been spared to be a comfort to your parents, remember you *do* be a comfort to them, Miss Emily, for it's my opinion you were born on purpose."

I saw it all clearly now. A wiser confidante than old Nurse could not have been found. That last idea of hers I clung to with delight, and, amidst all the follies, waywardness, and frolic of childish life, I do not think it was absent from me for any great length of time.

Nurse, too, encouraged me to believe that as I grew older, and more "reasonable-like," as she called it, my mother would find a friend as well as daughter in me. Meantime, what I had to do was clear enough—to be a double comfort to my parents. And perhaps nurse was right, thought I, perhaps I was born on purpose.

We had many more conversations, old Nurse and I, and I learnt from her that it was the same dreadful fever that had desolated Mr. Darcy's hearth which swept away our own four little ones. We lived in a different part of England then, Nurse told me, but changed our residence on my mother's account after the terrible bereavement.

Our secluded life was now in a great measure accounted for; but I found also that my father's means had been but limited, as he had given up his profession of barrister that he might devote himself to my mother. Of late, however, he had come into possession of a small property by the death of a distant relative, and he gladly availed himself of

this excuse, and of my increased years, to win my mother from the solitude he thought no longer necessary or desirable for her.

This, therefore, was the history of my first journey to London, and it seemed to me for long afterwards to have been the turning-point of my young life. Years of routine education could not have taught me what, in the providences of God, was opened before me during those few short months.

THE year of my first visit to London passed rapidly away, and another succeeded to it, and they were the happiest years I had ever remembered. My mother was better, and the drawing formed a link of intercourse between us, of which I was very proud. This, too, may have added somewhat to my industry in the pursuit, but a strong natural predilection, and the deep impression left upon me by my godfather, were no doubt the chief causes of the untiring perseverance with which, day after day, and month after month, I exercised the pencil in every possible way in my power.

At all spare moments, and even whilst talking, I was making straight or curved or other lines on scraps of paper, filling up the corners with bits of shading of various depths, or experiments upon the foliage of trees. My father and mother would sometimes smile when they observed me; but it was a smile of approbation, for they knew that such an unwearied practical interest on any subject carries with it an almost certain promise of success.

Then, too, I was greatly encouraged by the rapid advances I made. There cannot be a doubt that in its first stages, greater progress can be made in learning to draw than is possible in music, and of this I was quite sensible. Not that the art is in reality perhaps a more superficial one, but it requires less mechanical labour and dexterity.

The real artist, however—by which I mean especially the artist from Nature—has other difficulties to contend with, for although it is true that the hand acquires with a comparatively small amount of practice the knack of representing what the eye has been taught to see and to appreciate;—*there* lies the stumbling-block to success—how to see, and how to appreciate. It is so difficult to distinguish what is really seen from what is known or remembered, (my round pond may serve as the simplest illustration of this,) and so difficult among things really seen, to select those which are of use in producing the desired effect, and to reject others, which, however pleasing to the eye, must, on the reduced scale of a picture, lose all value, and in many cases disappear out of sight.

These, however, are not mechanical difficulties, nor do they trouble the path of the beginner, and I knew nothing about them while making copies from flat surfaces; and not by any means the worst of them when, at my mother's judicious suggestion in the second year of my labours, I began to make drawings from objects on the table and about the room—books, boxes, glasses, fruit, chairs, stools,

anything, in short, before me. Of course, I found these things much less easy to represent on paper than the flat copies I had tried before. But, helped by my mother, and aided by the recollection of some of my godfather's lessons in perspective, I got on so very much to my own satisfaction, that at last as I sat drawing I took to dreaming dreams of the British Museum and its mysterious door, and having conquered by a far too quick anticipation all hinderances to success, I lived at such times in an absolute world of my own. But such unreasonable visions soon received a check.

That year, after the winter had passed away, and the spring had come, and when it had advanced so far that the trees in the forest, on the borders of which we lived, began to look beautiful with the young foliage; and when the sunshine streaming upon every cottage in the lanes reminded me of my godfather's lecture on the "house with the sun shining on both sides at once," my ambition began to rise with the season. I thought of the Claudes and Ruysdaels I had seen in the treasured portfolio, and took the desperate resolution of going out alone to try my fortune in the art of sketching from Nature.

Having, in spite of myself, some secret sensation of the hopelessness of the attempt, I did not tell my mother, and, of course, therefore, did not stray far from home; but, in our lovely country, it was easy to find a scene beautiful and grand enough to have satisfied the most fastidious artist; and before such a one, I, in my childish ignorance, sat down.

Far, far be it from me, however, to record this little incident as if to warn others from similar emotions and attempts. Quite the reverse will, I hope, be the influence of my tale. Without this secret ambition, without these wild and unreasonable hopes, without these dreams of fairy-like success and reward, without, I will add, these baffled efforts, what of great and beautiful was ever achieved?

With no feeling of ridicule, therefore, do I relate my many vain attempts and their failure, but in order that through them I may teach others to avoid the same mistakes. Of the enthusiasm which gave birth to my daring endeavours, there is no need to be ashamed.

Of course, I was on these occasions met and foiled by the difficulties I lately described, although I could have given no account of them at the time. To me, in my ignorance, it seemed that I was baffled by some unaccountable obstacle, the nature of which it was impossible to detect.

But to the initiated, one glance at my drawings would have sufficed to prove that I had set to work without making any calculation as to how much of a view could be taken into the picture, and to what size it ought to be reduced. No wonder, therefore, that on the leaves of my sketch-book at this time were to be found the most ridiculous evidences of such an ignorance of first principles. The commencement of a window, perhaps, of such magnitude that all hope of seeing either side of the house to which it belonged, was futile; or part of the trunk

of a tree so situated on the paper that neither branches nor root could possibly be brought in; or, if by any accident I succeeded in jotting down complete some object of more manageable size, it was almost sure to be either up in the sky, leaving a sea of blank paper below to be filled up, no one could say how, or else driven into a corner where it seemed to have no connection with the other part of the attempted drawing.

Those who may have been inclined to call my childish ambition conceit, will now say I was rightly punished. But, without allowing this, I am ready to admit that the lesson thus taught was a most valuable one. Ah! though I got at it with tears, for I care not even now to enumerate how often I went out radiant with hope, and returned saddened by disappointment.

“My godfather could tell me all about it,” thought I to myself; but when with anxious curiosity I asked my mother if we were going to London that year, and she answered “No,” all hope in that direction was taken away. Then the having tried to keep my rash endeavours a grand secret from my mother until I was a little more successful, foolishly prevented my talking the matter over with her. But one day, on accidentally looking over my book, she said, “Somehow, these things are all the wrong size, and in the wrong place, Emily; don’t you think you had better go on copying for the present? But never mind, dear, do as you like, good often comes of making mistakes,” which words of hers

seemed to open my eyes all at once to my folly. Yes, the lesson was learnt now, and thus much good at any rate had come of the mistakes, that I had been brought face to face with difficulties I had been unable to surmount, and now at least knew of their existence. At least, I knew now that there were giants as well as grapes in the promised land, and that to obtain the latter I must be prepared to struggle and fight.

And with a resolution of which I am still proud, I henceforth stopped short when I caught myself dreaming of the British Museum, and the success yet so far off, and went back patiently and cheerfully to the drudgery of copying and object drawing.

Many a time, however, I used to wander out to gaze upon those beautiful scenes, the difficulties of representing which I still hoped at some time to master. One day, when I was wondering about them as I sat on some smooth greensward by the road, I observed, on lifting up my eyes, the sun shining on some old bits of paling that had been put up by the brook on the opposite side of the lane. And then, for the first time, it occurred to me that although extensive scenery, and picturesque buildings, and large trees were beyond my childish skill, I *might*, perhaps, be able to manage those palings. Truly *they* were not so very unlike the objects I had drawn in the house, and they looked very pretty. The longer I looked at them and thought about it, the prettier they seemed. By their sides grew some tall green nettles, and through the open spaces there was the bright little stream.

But could I, could I, draw even them? Ah! I was more modest now about my palings and nettles than I had been before over the most complicated views. Said I not well that I had learnt a valuable lesson .

Once more, however, I took out my book, and once more made trial of my skill, and no one, perhaps, but those born with the enthusiasm of art can fully understand the tremulous anxiety with which I commenced the attempt.

With a delicate and careful touch, as I had been instructed, I sketched in the outline first, and then with a caution, learnt from bitter experience, stopped to look at and examine it. Alas! I was destined to be baulked even over palings and nettles! There they stood before me, reaching from the top of the paper to the bottom, to the exclusion of sky and foreground. What was to be done? I suddenly recollected that some of my lithographed copies contained similar subjects, and ran into the house (for all this was close to home) for the book. And then I saw my mistake, though why it *was* a mistake no book could explain.

I now rubbed out all I had done, and leaving the same amount of sky as was allowed in the drawing-book, I began my palings once more, continuing the drawing from nature. But I was grown very wary by this time, and after a few strokes stopped again to examine. And then it was evident that, although I had not yet drawn the whole upper division of the real palings, I was nearly at the bottom of my paper.

Once more I erased the luckless marks, and then, referring to the book, determined on taking the height of those palings as a measure for my own, filling in the particulars from the real ones before me.

Here, then, at last I saw rising under my hand a drawing in due proportions, with a sky above, and a foreground in front. And in this way, oh reader, one of the giants was beaten! I had handicraft skill enough by this time to work out the shadows and lights tolerably well. My nettle leaves, even when viewed perspectively, were not bad. I worked till tea-time over this cherished morsel, almost cried at my mother's praise, and allowed myself to dream more than ever of the British Museum, and the London paradise.

Henceforth, of course, the palings by the brook became a favourite resort, and my mother would sometimes sit in the grass with me there while I drew. One day, in the early autumn, she asked me if I would go once more to the spot, and make another sketch; she thought my godfather would perhaps like one. A half-suppressed smile was on her face, as she said this. I did not understand it, but I went. And there I sat for perhaps about half-an-hour, when all at once I heard a noise down the lane, and to my great annoyance saw a carriage coming along, which threatened to disturb me.

Visitors so seldom came to our house, though of late oftener than they used to do, that I had never been interrupted here before. As the carriage approached, I stood up, and, with my sketching things

in my hand, retreated further back upon the grass, waiting till it was past.

But it did not pass. On the contrary, it came to a sudden stop, though this place was short of our gates, and before I had time to look again, or think, the door was opened, and I found myself in my old godfather's arms, and heard his kind voice say, "My dear little artist!"

Surely nobody was ever happier than I was that day! Surely as we all sat at tea in the large bow-window of the drawing-room that evening, watching the sun setting behind the distant woods, we were as joyous a party as could be found anywhere. At least *I* thought so, and said, laughing, as I pointed to the flowers that were peeping in at the window, "Even your London paradise can't be better than this, dear Godfather, for you can't have any honeysuckle there!"

"Ah, my darling," exclaimed he, "when we come really to talk about Paradise, we must all feel that what Mrs. Hemans says of 'Home' is true also of it." And then he repeated those beautiful lines—

"For what is home, and where, but with the loving?

Happy *thou* art, that so canst gaze on thine!

My spirit feels but, in its weary roving,

That with the dead, where'er they be, is mine."

"But come," he added cheerfully, checking himself, as I had seen him do before, when he feared to make my mother sad, "my Emily shall have her joke, even at my expense, her sketches of those palings deserve it richly."

“ But you don’t know about those unlucky sketches,” I interposed rather drearily.

“ Unlucky sketches? What can you be thinking of, little girl? They are very good, I can see.”

“ Ah, but I got the sizes, and found out where to begin from the copy-books,” murmured I, fearing my godfather might think there was something unfair about this.

“ And suppose you did, little girl,” was his reply, “ how were you to know the ‘ sizes,’ and ‘ where to begin,’ without being taught? and you hadn’t me here to teach you. And you looked in the book, and found out what to do, eh? I give you credit for the thought; one must learn somehow. I wonder you didn’t make the palings go from the top to the bottom of the page, that’s the usual way of beginning.”

“ That was just what I did do, Godfather,” cried I, in delight that he should think so little of the mistake; “ it’s what I always do do whenever I try to sketch.”

It was all out now, my difficulties, and sorrows, and blunders.

“ Never mind, never mind,” my godfather kept saying, as he turned over the pages of the drawing-book, “ the handling’s very good, and as for the ‘ sizes,’ ‘ and where to begin,’ and all that, I’ll tell you all about it to-morrow !”

It was wonderful and delightful to my young mind to have the Gordian knot of my perplexities un-

ravelled before my eyes, as was the case on the happy morrow that succeeded my godfather's arrival, when we went out together to my accustomed haunt opposite the palings.

After we had arranged ourselves side by side on the grass, he began—

“ Now sit upright, natural and easy.” And after a hint or two, I placed myself accordingly.

“ Now lift your hand, with the pencil in it, to your forehead, as if you were going to make me a salaam.”

I laughed, and did so.

“ Now lay the pencil across your nose, like a pair of spectacles.”

I did that too.

“ Now tell me whereabouts the pencil is ? ”

“ On the top of my nose, Godfather.”

“ Is it at the same height from the ground as the top of your forehead ? ”

“ Of course not.”

“ Is it at the same height from the ground as your eyes ? ”

“ Yes. It goes exactly across them.”

“ Very well. Then that is the *height of your eye*, remember. Now you may rest.”

“ But I'm not at all tired, Godfather,” said I, surprised.

“ I dare say not. But it's the rule for people to rest between each lesson. You have learnt one already.”

“ Is laying the pencil across my nose a lesson, Godfather ? ” asked I, jestingly.

“ No. But *finding the height of your eye is*, little girl, and that is what you have been doing, and what you have learnt to do. Try now, and remember that you never can find it, if you bend your head back so as to look up into the sky, or forward, so as to poke your nose to the ground, but only when you keep it square and straight, like a soldier on parade. Come, the height of your eye, Emily.”

I performed the feat to my godfather's satisfaction, and with the pencil across my nose awaited the next order. It was, “ Shut your left eye, little girl.”

It was done, and then,

“ Now look with the right eye over the pencil into the distance, and observe where it goes across the landscape all along. Notice any little objects it cuts through, and tell me.”

“ It cuts right through the middle of Farmer Jones's windmill, Godfather, and goes across his fields where the men are cutting the corn. The weathercock on the church steeple comes just exactly up to it, and the squire's house on the hill is half way between it and the top of the woods. My hand shakes.”

“ I dare say. Rest a moment. Well, now try again. But this time look nearer home. Whereabouts does the line of the pencil cut across your favourite palings ?”

“ Oh, there's an immense piece of one of them above it, and a little bit of another, and the rest are ever so far below.”

“ *Immense, and ever so far,*” cried my godfather,

laughing; "what sort of measurement is that, I wonder? But we shall make you more exact, presently. Down with your hand once more, and listen to me. You can now trace the line of the height of your eye right across the landscape, can you not Emily?"

"Yes, Godfather."

"Even without putting up the pencil?"

"Yes, I think so. Oh, yes, I recollect now where it cuts through, the windmill, and field, and the palings too."

"Very good. Now get out your drawing-book, and draw a line across the paper to match the line across the landscape, and whatever you noticed on, above, or below the one, put on, above, or below the other. Here is one guide, at least, as to *where to begin* your drawing, eh, Emily?"

It seemed so, indeed, and I was in haste to obey. But just as I was putting the pencil to the paper, a new difficulty started up. I did not know whereabouts to make the line.

"Does it matter whereabouts on the paper I draw the line across, Godfather?" asked I, impatient to begin.

"It is of the utmost importance to put it in the right place," answered he, gravely.

"But how am I to know the right place?" persisted I.

"By a rule I will give you, now that I have stopped your hurry by letting you feel the difficulty. You must put it a third of the way up the picture,

Emily. There are exceptions to this rule sometimes, but no matter about them now. A third of the height of the picture,—no higher at any rate,—is the rule. See, I will make the line for you.”

And taking the drawing-book, he marked off the height of the page into three equal portions, and drew a line across the first division, leaving two above it.

“ You must not forget this, Emily,” pursued my godfather. “ It is the sketcher’s great line, and the guide for the whole sketch. Whatever you saw cut through by the line across the landscape, you must draw, cut through by the line here, for instance. So, as you said the line cut right through the middle of Farmer Jones’s windmill in the landscape, you must make it do so in your sketch. Look ! put half the windmill above the line, and half below it, and there is the windmill just as you saw it.”

As my godfather touched it in, my delight knew no bounds, for my difficulties seemed to have half disappeared.

“ But now,” said he, “ before we go any further, let me teach you the proper name for this wonderful line. It is the line of the height of your eye, and it is called the line of the horizon, or *horizontal line* ; the line where, but for broken ground, heaven and earth would seem to you to meet. In sea views they always do seem to meet there, but on land, mountains and woods interfere. Now then for *proportions*, which nothing but practice can make you see correctly.”

He then made me try to calculate how high the distant woods rose above the horizontal line, as compared with something else, a river, for instance, which ran below it. Taught me to observe how small (by comparison with the palings in front) the windmill was after all; and how easy it was to ascertain its proper size in the landscape by noticing how much of the height of the paling it occupied. He pointed out to me that the men who were cutting the corn must be jotted in as insignificant dots, if reduced to their proper proportions on my "trumpery bit of paper," and so, between jest and earnest, he impressed indelibly on my mind a notion of the first principles for bringing the different objects in a scene into relative proportion.

"Now for the palings, little girl," he cried. "Up with the pencil to your eye and shut the other. How much above the distant woods does the tallest paling come?"

"An immense way, Godfather; right up into the sky."

"Come, come, we shall find out what *immense* is at last. Hold the pencil upright in your hand now, and use it as a measure. Measure in the air, opposite the distance, how much of the pencil the distant woods above the horizontal line cover. There, you see, about half an inch; I thought so. Now look how high the paling rises above the horizontal line."

"A great deal higher than the woods go, I am sure," said I.

“ No doubt; but till we know how much, we cannot put it down. Twice as high, do you think, Emily ? ”

“ Quite, Godfather; indeed, now I try again, it is twice as high and a little more.”

“ Excellent little scholar! This is better than *immense*, isn't it? for now we can put the top of the paling on the paper just where you say—*twice as high* above the horizontal line, as the wood is, and *a little more*.”

To pursue these details further would be wearisome. When the places of the principal objects—the palings for foreground, the windmill, woods, church, and river—had been found, and my godfather had sketched them in, it seemed to me as if half my giants had been slain at a blow. But all the labour and taste of the filling up remained to be done, and this my godfather would not touch.

“ No, no, my Emily,” cried he. “ I have shown you how you may arrange any landscape, however great, or any morsel of one, however small; but if you are really ambitious, little girl, you will set about things in the right way, and not attempt the great things till you have conquered the small. Palings and nettles will furnish you with work for a couple of years, and then you may think about these beautiful views.”

But he did not in reality confine me to that one subject. When we went out into the woods and lanes together, he would always find some pretty stump of a tree with burdocks growing near it, or a

half-worn shed, or rude thatched cottage, fitted to my skill. On other occasions I was not to draw at all, but watched him through the whole progress of a sketch; and many a time this pleasant work was made still more delightful, and especially when my mother was with us, by conversation that gave a cast of romance to everything it touched upon.

Of the world of Nature he never wearied to speak, and from him I learnt to look at it at once with an artist's eye, and the correct observation of a naturalist. These two, he said, ought always to go together. He pointed out to me the spirally twisted lines on the trunk of the Spanish chestnut, making me compare this peculiarity with the smooth blotched bark of the beech; taught me to observe the brilliant effects of black and white on the slender birch, and to contrast it with the diamond-shape notches in the oak, or the lichen-spotted ash. He made me notice also the undulating ramification of some trees, and the stiff, angular formation of others, contending that, without attention to the distinguishing features with which Nature has stamped her children, no one could give character or reality to his work.

The result of this was, that when I arose from a drawing lesson, I had learnt nearly as much botany as art, and while making careful representations of groups of leaves, such as coltsfoot, burdock, plantain, and others, studying their shapes, and the lights and shadows among them, I got to know more of their formation and modes of growth than many days' reading of books could have taught me.

Let me be forgiven for dwelling thus fondly on those bright days of my "childhood in art;" on those lessons that taught so many things at once, and qualified me to appreciate afterwards the masterpieces which my godfather valued so much, as records, not only of what was beautiful, but of what was real.

I would fain, also, if possible, tempt other young ones, who think of drawing at present, perhaps, merely as one of the daily lessons that has to be learnt, to pursue it hand in hand with the study and love of Nature. Then dry lesson-work ends for ever, and a new world full of poetic thought and refined enjoyment opens before them, where, though their labour will not be less, their pleasure will be infinitely increased.

Ah! when not pursued *spiritually*, if I may be allowed the expression, how little do accomplishments, or even learning, give a charm to the individual character! Graces they are, perhaps, but nothing more until they become outlets for the expression of the soul and sentiment within. Then, indeed, in the arts we recognize a something of inspiration, and what was before a lifeless and uninteresting occupation, seems to awaken to a new life.

I knew nothing of this at the time; but I have become aware since, that I might have learnt drawing from clever draughtsmen without number, and yet gained nothing of the best part of what I acquired during the occasional meetings with my poor godfather.

Nor was it only the love of Nature and the perception of the beautiful that I learnt from him. He first brought vividly before my mind, in connection with the scenes around us, the thought that if the world here be indeed so beautiful, and so exhaustless of wonder, that the longest life cannot compass the knowledge of it, what must there not be in store for us, in the blessed hereafter beyond the grave!

Thus through art we went to Nature, and through the wonders and beauties of Nature up to the hope of the unconceived glories of a future state.

How my mother's eye would brighten, and her spirit seem refreshed, by the cheering influence of intercourse such as this, I need not dilate upon. Would that such communion were less rare! To beings placed as we are, in the midst of a precarious life, every idea which assists us to contemplate our future condition, in hopeful connection with the present, ought surely to be encouraged to the uttermost. The trappings and ceremonials of death cast a gloom over what, by the humble, practical Christian, ought to be talked of, and looked forward to as a change in every respect joyous; and it would be well if we accustomed ourselves to think oftener and more familiarly of the bright side of the picture, drawing from the delights and beauties of the present world, sweet and hopeful thoughts of the one that is so far to surpass it.

In the young especially such a habit ought to be cultivated. On my own mind the suggestions of my godfather left a most powerful effect, and many

a night, in many an after year, did I look out of my casement window on our lovely landscape of river and wood and distant hills, as it lay bathed in the bright moonlight, and wonder with hopeful joy of the future that was to excel even that!

Often then, too, I used to think with tender delight of those unknown brothers and sisters who, while I was still confined to the lower state, were now in the enjoyment of a foretaste of that wonderful future, with its unexplained glories.

Is it too much to say that, familiarized thus gently to meditate upon the mysterious hereafter, the wonderings and imaginings, over which I often fell asleep at last, were to me so many additional, if lesser, motives, so to live here that I might hope to be transplanted to the better land in store for the children of light?

As to my dear godfather, from this first of his many visits to us, and from the earliest of his lessons in sketching from Nature, I always connected him in my own mind, in some indefinite way, with that favourite line of his *where heaven and earth*, as he described it, *seemed to meet together*.

ANOTHER or two of my godfather's lessons, in connection with the horizontal line, are perhaps worth recording. They saved me from many comical, but common blunders, and, if I can explain them properly, they may be equally useful to others.

One day a lady in the neighbourhood, hearing that Mr. Darcy was staying with us, and knowing

his artistic taste, as well as my own aspirations in the same line, sent over a valuable album of drawings for us to look at.

It was a folio volume, splendidly bound, and protected by a lock and key; and truly it contained a few water-colour drawings by some of the real artists of the day: but the greater part of the productions were by the lady's private friends; and many of them were sketches of houses and places to which some particular personal interest was attached.

I had seen a part, at any rate, of the collection several times before, and had been, to own the truth, not a little impressed by the brilliancy of colouring which its pages displayed as they were turned over; although the drawings of the one or two places which I knew—our own church and village, for instance—had never been quite satisfactory to me, in spite of the tower coming off so vividly from the bright blue sky.

But I was unable to tell why I did not like it. The fine Italian tone of colouring was a sort of compliment to the place, and made it look much gayer than I had ever seen it do. But still there was something the matter with the sketch—nay, even with the church tower itself—which made it offensive to me. I had looked at it, with my head on one side, at every possible angle—first to the right, then to the left, and then I had looked at it straight again; but all to no purpose: what was amiss with it I could never divine.

We sat down to this folio album, my godfather and

I, with delight; at least such was my feeling, and he seemed to be almost as much pleased as myself.

We contemplated and remarked upon, as is usual in such cases, the beautifully-embossed outside leather, and the glowing gilt leaves—and then, after the unlocking ceremony was over, ventured to begin the inspection of the contents. I suppose my chief interest, in reality, was to hear Mr. Darcy's opinions of the different drawings, for my own employment consisted, as I well remember, in watching his face and listening to his remarks. And very funny both the one and the other were, every now and then!

“Ay, ay! charmingly brilliant indeed. A Grecian sky, and the horticultural gardens, in the highlands of Scotland. *Loch*—something or other underneath. A pretty idea, and energetically carried out. Emily, dear, turn over the page.—

—“No, no! what have we here? A huge green caterpillar gliding over a cactus-flower, and a butterfly peeping in on the other side. And, oh dear me, a tiny humming-bird flying down to eat them both up! But no, he could not accomplish it I believe. Were it to come to a fight, the caterpillar would decidedly have the best of it. He seems amazingly strong in the legs. Well done Art against Nature! Turn away, Emily. I am not fond of creepy-crawlers out of their place.”

“But is not the cactus-flower very like and very well done?” interposed I.

“Fairly coloured, and fairly drawn;” replied my godfather. “The mechanical skill tolerable;

but neither truth, nor grace, nor taste in the composition. It will not do to have the eye tickled and the mind offended, Emily. Such artists come from the world without souls. What comes next? Ah, Italy again with the fatal gift, and Venice I suppose in particular, with a bevy of fruit-and-flower-vending girls in picturesque costume."

And so saying, my godfather began to turn over this page after the rest, when suddenly he stopped, and laid it down again.

"*Misericordia!* my dear little artist, do you see what is in the corner — '*Scene in Hull?*' Well, no matter! I dare say the artist was in a hurry, and wrote the name by mistake. Let us go on!"

And we went on, over many more pages, more or less deserving praise or criticism, till at last we came to the drawing which had so often puzzled me; the sketch of our village and church.

My godfather turned from it to look at me, and found me looking at him.

"Do you like this, Emily?"

I smiled and owned that I did not, but could give no reason why. Yet, there seemed, even to me, to be something wrong about it.

"It is something to have found out as much as that," replied my godfather. "The tower is in false perspective; ludicrously so, considering the amount of handling skill evinced by the drawing. As it is, the thing vexes one's eye to look at it."

"Can I understand the mistake?" I asked.

On which my godfather replied, that I perhaps might if I would pay close attention to what he had to say; but he proposed not to begin a lesson on church towers until we had gone through the album; to which I readily assented, as the book contained another puzzle about which I was longing to hear his remarks.

We came to this at last. It was a drawing of the interior of a room, in the middle of the floor of which, two little girls, seated on two little chairs, were playing with a kitten.

The children had nice little faces, and pretty little flounced frocks, and the kitten was as well done as cats can hope to be, until some cat Landseer rises up in their behalf. But somehow or other—how, was a mystery—both the chairs, and the children, and the kitten, and even the carpet itself, seemed to be sloping forwards, as if intent upon slipping into one's lap, as a resting-place from the inclined plane on which they had all been doing penance by holding up so long.

“What is it, Godfather?” asked I.

He shook his head at my question.

“You ought almost to be able to tell me, Emily. Whereabouts is the horizontal line in this picture?”

“Does that rule about the horizontal line do for the insides of rooms as well as for landscapes, Godfather?” I asked.

“Why should it not?” was his answer. “It is founded upon laws which act everywhere alike. The horizontal line is the height of your eye, and if

you place all your figures *below* it, *their* eyes must, of course, be below *your* eyes, and you must, of course, have drawn them looking *down upon* them, instead of *at* them; which is just the case here," continued he, pointing to the interior with the two little girls. "Here you actually see into the children's laps, and on the tops of their heads, as if you were perched half-way up to the ceiling to observe them.

"And it is the same with this sea of a carpet. Just look at it! Look at these circular Tudor roses, alternating with diamonds. Why, either the artist must have been in the air, or else have been staring at the carpet at his feet, to see the pattern as it is represented here. And this is the very fault I warned you against on the first day of our acquaintance. You cannot have forgotten your circular duck-ponds, Emily? Not that these roses are such complete circles as your ponds were, but they tend sadly too much towards them, especially in the front rows!"

I was amused, but nevertheless only half understood what Mr. Darcy considered to be the fault, and answered:—

"But in a common-place room, Godfather, where the space is so small, one really does look into people's laps, as you call it."

"True, Emily; but that is a fault of circumstance, which you cannot introduce into art with impunity. Sir Thomas Lawrence, even in a large room, thought it necessary to get rid of the difficulty

by mounting his sitters upon a dais or throne; by which means his eyes, as he stood to paint, were on a level with theirs; or below, certainly never above them. And, without a dais, you can secure the same result by sitting on a stool yourself while you draw. This will enable you to give the objects even in a small room, without producing the effect of having looked down upon them to see them; and the pattern of your carpet will then, even at a short distance from you, be seen in tolerable perspective; and the figures upon it will consequently *not* seem to be running down upon you in return for your pains. But the subject has more involved in it than that. Shall I try to explain any more?"

Of course, I wished him to do so, but added: "I wonder how it is that as the things really are so in the room, they do not look well when put down on paper?"

"Because though they *are so*, as you call it, you do not see them so."

But I thought I *did* see them so, and ventured to say as much.

"But *how?*" cried my godfather, evidently very much amused; "only by playing at peep-bo I am afraid, Emily. Now listen to me. There can be no doubt, in the first place, that the drawings most agreeable to the eye, are those that represent scenes which fall within the range of human sight as a man stands upright and looks forward in that position which is what the books call his 'proud prerogative.' A bombastic mode of expres-

sion; but the fact is, that whereas beasts do, by their conformation, most naturally look downwards, so man, by his conformation, most naturally looks forwards; and the scenes he so sees are more agreeable to his feelings than any others. Birds'-eye views are occasionally very useful, and even impressive, as giving a large extent of landscape, or the whole of a vast interior; but artistically, they (as a general rule) fall short of the beauty of drawings taken as I describe.

“ But, in the second place, there is a natural limit to this *range of human sight*, even when a man stands in the proper position, and looks straight forwards; and within that limit do not come either the path or the carpet immediately at his feet, nor for some distance *en avant* of his feet. Do you understand?”

I shook my head at once, and my godfather smiled and explained.

“ I will begin by an unmistakable case. I was once sketching a house, the front and side view combined, and one of the children of the family came to look at what I had done. It was then nearly completed, and was a very fair portrait; but when I asked the child if he thought it like, he shook his head, and said, ‘ No,’ because he could not see his nursery windows. Now, considering that the nursery windows were at the back of the house, the introduction of them was not very practicable, eh? *They did not* fall within the natural range of human vision, and consequently could not be represented in a drawing.”

“ I wish it was all as clear as that,” said I.

“ Well, let us see what can be done towards clarifying the remainder,” pursued my godfather.

“ Sit upright and easy in your chair, where you are ; put your feet flat on the floor, and draw your frock a little back so that the tips of your shoes may emerge from it. And now, look at the bookcase opposite you, and tell me whether you see your toes ?”

Without thinking of what I was doing, I ducked my head down to glance at my feet ; on which my godfather exclaimed that that was not fair, and I began to guess what he meant.

“ Little goose !” he exclaimed ; “ of course, you can see your toes when you look *down* upon them ; but what I wanted to know was, whether you saw them when you were looking straight before you at the bookcase.”

I laughed and said, “ Of course not,” and he went on :—

“ *Of course*, then, here is a second limit to the natural range of human vision. That you could not see the back and front windows of a house at the same time you knew without my teaching, but now you perceive there is a limit to your sight, even of the things that lie straight before you. Now look up again at the bookcase, and tell me, if you can, what are the boundary lines of the limit. Whereabouts in front of you do you begin to see ?”

I tried to make out, but failed.

“ I cannot tell, Godfather. Half of the things are all in confusion.” I spoke despondingly, for I feared I was stupid.

“ Neither can I tell you,” replied he, “ so you are not far behind your neighbours ; but the fact of there being a limit is as clear to you as to me. What is immediately at your feet you do not see at all. As the distance from you increases, you begin to see objects imperfectly, and then comes a range within which you see everything comfortably, and agreeably, because without effort. Now this is what I meant by the natural range of human vision ; and, on the fact of there being a limit to it, though not an absolute one, artists have constructed certain corresponding limit-laws of their own, for the manufacture of pictures ; by means of which all such glaring absurdities as this interior is guilty of, may be avoided. Not that they have tied themselves to put nothing upon canvass but what can be seen with one glance of the eye ; but they *have* tied themselves never to put on one piece of paper, to be looked at at once and together, objects which have only been seen by holding the head and eyes in half-a-dozen different positions ; drawings so constructed being sure to turn out distorted and unnatural, inasmuch as they have defied the laws of nature in their composition, and so look wrong even to juvenile artists like my Emily, who, I was glad to find, *felt* the wrong, although she did not know in what it consisted. But now for one of these artistic rules. Or are you tired, Emily ? ”

No, I was not tired, and he went on :—

“ The rule is, that there must always be a *certain* amount of distance between the artist and the ob-

jects he is going to make a picture of. There may be *more* if he pleases, but a *certain amount* there must be. Now this 'Distance of the Picture,' as it is called (in other words the artist's distance *off* the picture), is regulated in the first instance by the height of the horizontal line from the ground.* A space equal to *twice that height* and *one third more* being the *smallest* distance that is allowed. You see at once by this that introducing the tips of your own toes or the carpet at your feet into a picture is out of the question. But you will understand me better by making an experiment.

"Seat yourself on the sofa. Now then the top of the rather low mantel-piece opposite you is on a level with your eye, and there, therefore, is your horizontal line. And say that its height from the ground is about four feet, you must measure off on the floor, from where you sit, *nine feet and one third* of untouchable space—space which you have no business to include within your picture, for it must remain the distance between you and your picture. And art has ruled this, remember, because Nature has previously ruled that there is a part of that space which you do not see at all, and that you see the rest very imperfectly.

"But at the distance of nine feet and a third from your feet, your comfortable power of seeing is supposed to begin, and at that point, accordingly, art permits you to begin your sketch.

* In drawing objects on a table the *table* becomes the *ground*, or bottom of the picture, and the rule is equally available.

“Remember, however, that these are the *nearest* allowable limits; a wider distance of three times the height of the horizontal line from the ground is decidedly to be preferred, and more if you please. The rule has a latitude depending partly on the subject to be represented.”

“Then in this room,” said I, half in despair, “I should scarcely be allowed to draw two feet of space in front of the mantel-piece; the width is only eleven feet. Godfather one could get nothing in!”

“More than you think, provided you drew in good perspective,” answered my godfather, smiling; “but if the two feet is not enough space for you, have recourse to my remedy. Slip off the sofa and sit on a cushion on the floor. The horizontal line descends as you descend, and the distance of your picture diminishes in proportion. The top of the *grate* is now the height of your eye, and is not more than two feet from the hearth. See, Emily, you stoop to conquer. You may now take in double the space of room you could do from the sofa.”

I was delighted. Here was a new practical fact to work by, and the previous explanations made me feel its justness. Mr. Darcy proceeded too to give me some rough simple plans on the subject for common use. Out of doors, for instance, where measurement was often impossible, he recommended me to take an empty slate-frame, about the size of my paper, and, holding it at the distance of its widest width from my

nose, to note the scene enclosed within it as within a picture frame, for all that I might safely put in a sketch.

And after this, and a few other hints,* we had a good laugh together, though not an ill-natured one, (for had I not, ten minutes previously, been just as ignorant myself?) on the comical interior we had been sitting in judgment upon, where the artist had defied the laws both of nature and art, by placing the horizontal line more than half way up the picture, and then allowing almost no *distance of picture* at all; for it was evident by the tracings of the carpet pattern, that he had worked very nearly up to the ground at his feet.

It was in the course of this discussion that another arose, which led to the explanation of the church tower difficulty, and which I will proceed to give in full.

When my godfather asked me *whereabouts was the horizontal line*, in the picture of the interior, I did not feel any certainty of how to find it out. It is quite possible he may have given me general rules upon the subject before; but rules seldom make a clear impression till they are illustrated by practical examples, and I was a very imperfect scholar up to this time.

But now, referring to the drawing, he pointed out that at a certain height up the walls, the sloping lines of the bookcases on one side, and of the win-

* See the subject very usefully treated in Rowbotham's "Art of Sketching from Nature."—Winsor and Newton: London.

dow frames on the other, became gradually less and less sloping, till at last they formed as straight a line as those of the picture-frames at the end of the room ; and, " There," said he, " must, therefore, be the horizontal line ; for it is only at the height of your eye that circular and angular lines assume the appearance of perfectly straight ones. You remember the straight silver line you saw, when the crown-piece was on a level with your eye, surely ?"

I remembered it well ; and then, to prove the truth of what he had asserted about angular lines also, my godfather took up a box of the old-fashioned Chinese puzzle, and showed me, by experiments on the pieces in succession, that the lines of different sides of any triangle form one continuous straight one to the eye when raised to the particular level in question.

And the rule held good, he assured me, as regarded buildings, whether you were outside or inside them : and was equally true of a round, and a square building, of a barrel and a church tower, as he would show me.

And taking up a pencil he sketched side by side, on one piece of paper, a couple of tall chimnies, the one round, the other square, (the latter with two sides in sight,) marking out the divisions between the rows of bricks with neat pencilling, observing as he did so :—

" I am taking for granted, Emily, that the masons who built these chimnies were very exact, and laid

all their rows of bricks perfectly level. This is an important fact, remember."

I nodded my head. He began this filling up at the top of the chimnies, and, of course, made their shape obvious enough by the shape of the lines, drawing semicircular ones on the round chimney, and lines sloping two ways to express the two sides of the other. But suddenly he broke off, and said, "Now for the lines at the height of the eye!" and at about a third of the way up the paper he drew his pencil straight across both the chimnies alike.

I could not help smiling at first, it seemed so odd; but when he proceeded to give gradually increasing indications of circular form to the lines *above* the straight horizontal one on the round chimney, and of a two-sided angle to those on the square one, till the characters became distinct, and the lower lines fitted in with those he began with at the top, I became really interested and delighted.

"And now, Emily," said he, stopping once more, "look at my work. Here, at the height of your eye, the lines of brick-work round the circular chimney, and those of the two sides of the square one, appear equally what they are not, for they appear continuous straight lines; whereas in one case the line is circular, and in the other there are two lines running in different directions, but meeting in an angle.

"But the moment you look at the brick-work markings *above* the height of your eye, that delusion is over, and they assume an appearance which betrays

the true shape of the buildings. Nevertheless, at the same moment that you get rid of one delusion, you become liable to another—such is life! It would be difficult to persuade any uninstructed person that these semicircular lines on one chimney, or two-sided angles on the other, represent *level* rows of bricks, which yet they actually do; and just as much so at the top of the chimney, where they slope excessively, as below at the horizontal line, where their being flat becomes evident.

“ These and all the intermediate appearances are dependent on the laws of Optics, which is in fact the science of *how we see*; and when you are older you must get some one to explain the matter to you, if you desire it. *My* lessons are purely *practical*, although accompanied by reasonable whys and wherefores.”

My godfather paused; and as I sat looking at the lines on the chimnies, and observed that as yet he had not drawn a single row of brick-work *below* the horizontal line on either of them, I began wondering how they would have to be made; and recalling the lessons of the crown-piece, and the Chinese puzzle, it soon struck me, and I said:—

“ I suppose the lines *below* the horizontal line will have to go exactly the reverse way of those above it, Godfather.”

“ Well guessed,” he answered, watching me take up the pencil and begin; “ and you are doing them quite right,” he soon added.

“ Yes, yes! *I* started from a point on one side,

and curved the line *upwards* to its middle, and thence *downwards* to an exactly opposite point on the other side. *You* have started from a point on one side, and curved your line *downwards* to its middle, and thence *upward* to the corresponding point on the other side; exactly the reverse way of my lines, as you said. Very good! Now attack the square building in the same manner. Here are my lines *above* the horizon, you see. From certain points in the wall they rise to the angle in the middle, where the sides of the building meet, and thence descend to a point in the wall exactly opposite. Reverse this; carry your line down first; that will do; and now up again; for remember it as a universal rule for square buildings, which you are looking at edgeways, (that is, with one of the angles facing you,) if you draw the line of one side sloping upward *to* the angle of meeting, you must draw the line of the other side sloping downward *from* the angle of meeting. And this holds good, Miss Emily, whether you are sketching chimnies or church towers! For—”

But, before he could say another word, I had jumped up, and, tossing my pencil down, called out in no small excitement:—

“ Then that was it! ”

There was no need to ask *what was what*? Mr. Darcy turned back the leaves of the album at once, till he came to the sketch of the puzzling church tower, and pointing to one corner of it, looked up at my face with a smile.

“ Oh, I recollect it so well ! ” cried I. “ How stupid I have been ! But I remember perfectly, wondering what became of the battlements round the corner ! ”

I might well have wondered. The two sides of the battlements were drawn *sloping in one direction*, and that direction *upwards* into the sky !

“ *What became of the battlements round the corner !* ” repeated my godfather, laughing. “ A very good idea, and a very needful enquiry, only I do not know who is to answer it. I doubt if even the artist himself could. The builder certainly not, who built the tower square. But put the book aside for a minute. I have a word more to say about this chimney of mine. I made the two sides of it alike in width, putting the angle exactly in the middle, in order that my lesson might be simpler.

“ But this is not by any means a picturesque point of view for a sketch of a building. Nay, it is unpicturesque, and you must avoid it. The artist of your church tower made a much wiser choice ;—I am in earnest—look at it. That is what may be called a three-quarters view ; you see twice as much of one side as of the other. But still the angle of the building faces you, and, therefore, my rules hold good, only the slope of the lines on the wider side of the tower will be much less acute than on the narrower side. When the angle of meeting is in the middle, as you see it in the chimney, the amount of slope is the same on both sides. And other rules come into operation when the *flat* side of a square

building faces you, as you will find both by making the experiment and by referring to books. But one thing is *always* impossible, viz. that two sides of a right angle should ever appear to *slope* in the same direction. They *do* appear to form a continuous *straight* line when they are exactly at the height of the horizon, but to *slope* either up or down in the same direction—never ! ”

We went out, I remember, in the afternoon of that day of lessons on church towers and interiors, and Mr. Darcy showed me experimentally, by an appeal to eyesight, the truth of his indoor rules.

Altogether, however, I felt disheartened by these perspective difficulties. It seemed that there was so much that was abstruse and difficult, to be learnt, that I feared both for my industry and capability. The very mention of such a science as Optics, too, was absolutely alarming. But fortunately I did not keep these fears to myself; and when I enquired of my godfather whether a thorough knowledge of the laws of Perspective and Optics was absolutely necessary for my being able to draw correctly, his excessive amusement quite re-assured me.

“ If you were going to devote yourself to architectural drawing, however,” said he, “ I might perhaps say yes, as regarded the laws of Perspective, though I *have* seen wrongly-managed architectural drawings before now ; things put on paper as people never saw them. But, for all the common purposes of a landscape and general artist, a few of the very simplest rules,—some of which I have taught you

practically to-day,—are all sufficient ; and in special occasions of need you have books to refer to. Perspective rules are more useful in enabling you to discover what is wrong than to do what is right yourself. But if you stick to my one grand order you need have no fears. Only *draw things as you see them, and not as you know they are*, and, with rare exceptions, you will find that you can put everything that comes before you on paper. This rule sounds simple enough, but, I admit, nevertheless, that sight-delusions are so numerous, there is often a difficulty in carrying it out. I assure you it is only by persevering toil, and reiterated observation, that you can learn to know what *you really do see*. There, Emily ! that is all the optics I recommend to your study and attention ! ”

LET me pass quickly over the next few years of my life. They swept noiselessly on, and to me deepened in interest as they advanced. I had realized my nurse's views, and had become—as if I had been born on purpose—a comfort to both my parents ; and if, by having fewer young companions than is usual, and by holding close intercourse with my mother, I was a little less gay in manner than others of my age, I was certainly not less really happy. How could I be ? I was ambitious and aspiring.

The foot of queenly beauty never trod with a firmer and more buoyant step than mine did, when I went out into the glories of the visible world, and forgot for a time that it was fallen !

Blessed dream ! Heaven and earth for me were always meeting together ; and when realities of sin and sorrow were forced upon me, my grief, however bitter, was tempered by the unconquerable hope that the tide of evil must, by the mercy of the Almighty, be one day turned back for ever from His beautiful Creation !

One year that we happened to be in London when my godfather was abroad, my father laughingly said, that although I might be too young to say “sesame” to the mysterious door of the Print Room, I was not too young to go to the rest of the British Museum ; and he accordingly took me over that wonderful and magnificent place, worthy indeed of the British nation both within and without.

But struck as I was by many of the things I then saw, by the colossal Egyptian figures scarcely less than by the Elgin Marbles, and more than all, perhaps, by the relics of Egyptian civilization, and its preservation of the dead as mummies, the hurried manner in which we necessarily went through the whole—natural history on the top of ancient art — hieroglyphics followed by stuffed beasts—a library of confusing magnitude succeeded by a fairy-land of corals from southern seas—quite prevented any effect being produced except one of fatigued surprise. And that this is the natural result of the usual way of visiting the national collections, anyone who has made the experiment will, I believe, be ready to admit.

I often thought the matter over afterwards, and

reflected how small an amount of real enjoyment those have in the place, who run through all its wonders in this wild way; doing an amount of porter's work with the eyes and attention, which may well make them rejoice to get the affair over.

But, certainly, people's ideas and methods of enjoyment are so various that it is impossible to set up a standard on the subject. There is a received notion that it is one of the prescriptive businesses of an Englishman's life to visit the British Museum once; and to do it thoroughly at that once, and have done with it, is a great satisfaction to many people.

Again, others perhaps may really like the fidgetty variety of subjects presented to their notice. They prefer glancing at many, and thinking of none, to the labour involved in the smallest amount of study and meditation.

But, nevertheless, all these people grow weary after a time, and are as glad to get away as they had been to go; so I suppose the real enjoyment is with the labourers after all!

This is but a supposition, however. How little one half the world knows how the other half lives has often been said. How little also do the two halves know each other's pleasures and pains; each other's inward life! How incomprehensible each would often be to each, if they did!

More than once have I lingered among the pillars of the portico of the Museum to watch the different countenances and bearing of those who were ascending the steps to enter that treasure-house of curio-

sities and learning, and mused to myself upon the contrasts presented.

What a gulf lies between the earnest student in either Art or Nature, History or Antiquity, who goes up as a loving disciple, and the crowds who have driven to the place for an afternoon's lounge, and saunter in without any definite object ! How little could he enter into their indifference, or they into his enthusiastic zeal ! How strange to him would seem their endurance of life without an intellectual interest ! What a mystery to them would be his profound ambition, his indefinite hopes, his mental elation about things which to the practical world seem so dead and uninteresting ; and which they are so apt to ridicule as useless !

Unjustly so, however, surely ! Surely no instinct was ever given in vain ; without an appointed end, and that end involving good. And if so, it cannot be supposed that man is so mocked of his Maker as to have been gifted with capacities for intellectual enquiry, and inspired with an inextinguishable thirst for knowledge ; so constituted also as to derive from its acquisition a pleasure quite as unaccountable as that produced by the harmony of sounds—to *no purpose*—with no result, but that when he dies all his thoughts perish.

What may be the purposes, and what the results, are points about which many differences of opinions exist.

The lowest view was once stated by Dr. Johnson ; when being asked the *cui bono* of intellectual pursuits, he answered, that they served to “ carry on the

system of life:"* one man's disposition leading him in that direction, as another man's leads him to the delight of great bodily exertion.

In both which cases, it is evident, here are lively interests, carrying on the system of life with pleasure and comfort to the individual.

But another view goes further than this, and admits that the arts and sciences and intellectual studies are all instruments permitted by God for the comfort, benefit and progress, of His creatures upon earth. Out of them, when hand in hand with humanizing Christianity, the world's civilization has arisen. In them man's destiny of progress is wrapped up. Men are to "run to and fro," and "knowledge" is to be "increased." So it is written, for so God has willed; and those among mankind who are born with the natural yearning to carry out this particular portion of the decrees of the Almighty, may comfort themselves by reflecting that in so doing they are fulfilling His will as well as their own.

And this is no mean consideration. Indirectly, all intellectual pursuits, unless misdirected by Satanic influence, have a tendency towards refining the moral sense: towards

"Working out the beast;"

and letting

"The ape and tiger die."

* How much more than this Dr. Johnson was inclined to admit, when the subject was brought more fully under discussion, may be seen in "Boswell's Life," vol. ii. pages 9 and 155, and vol. iv. page 146.—(Crocker's Edition.)

But though this is much, is it all? Still, when a man dies, are all his thoughts to perish? Or rather I would prefer saying, is there to be no result from his thinking, but that he has pushed the circle in which he moved on earth one tiny step further in social advancement, and helped to adorn and perhaps guide it?

Are the strong tendencies and desires of the soul, implanted in us by God Himself, and surely one form of the "talents" of the Scripture Parable, to die with the body as the body's tendencies and desires die? Is faithfulness over the ten or the five talents put into our hands here, *not* to be any preparation for a corresponding trust hereafter? Is the meaning of the parable really limited to different amounts of worldly goods and bodily comforts?

Most certainly it is only in the paths of Christian faith and Christian practice that we can attain the heavenly mansions. Only for those who *love Him* hath God prepared "the things which eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;" and, unsanctified by that love, human effort can accomplish nothing better than the inconsistencies of pagan wisdom.

But of those who *love Him* there will be young and old, wise and foolish, learned and unlearned. And the "diversities of gifts" and "differences of administrations" here, may well shadow out to us a scheme of varied requirements hereafter, in which the devout philosophy of a Newton, and the simple

faith of the illiterate peasant boy, may each find their appropriate place.*

To return from this long digression upon a subject which will, at any rate, have an interest for those who are wondering whether they are wasting their time or not in indulging in the energetic pursuit of their natural talents!—

Time passed on, and a day at last dawned when my childhood's visions were to be realized, and I was privileged and admitted as a visitor to the London paradise, into which the ordinary sight-seer is not allowed entrance. But, alas! how differently

* Who can forget Dante's description of the smile of the Spirits in the Lunar Heaven, when he enquired of them whether they who were happy there ever desired a higher place, and then of the glow of divine love which shone round the one who made answer to the effect that it was against the very nature of heavenly happiness to will anything different to the will of the Ruler of Heaven, from whom all happiness emanated.

Dante's conclusion upon the matter is well deserving notice:—

“ Chiaro mi fu allor, com' ogni dove
In Cielo è Paradiso, etsi la grazia
Del sommo Ben d' un modo non vi piove.”

“ It was clear to me then, how that every where in Heaven is Paradise, although the grace of the Divine Good (God) does not rain there in one method.”

I cannot subscribe to Mr. Wright's translation:—

—————“ though different be

The appointed *measure* of the heavenly grace.”

There may be as many *methods* of being blessed as there are many natures to be satisfied, each after its kind; but the *measure* may be the same to all. This is a distinction I hope all my readers will endeavour to understand.

circumstanced was I by that time to what I had hoped and expected!

I was in mourning for him who should have been there to accompany me—him to whose early teaching I was so much indebted—him who had fostered in me that taste and love for art which had now for years cast such a charm over my life—my long-loved godfather: and of this sad event of his death I must speak more particularly.

We had gone to London very late in the autumn of the previous year, and it had been settled that I might at last visit the Print Room at the Museum, and my godfather was to have taken me there, and I was wild with excitement and delight.

On our arrival in town at night, however, a letter awaited us. It was from my poor godfather himself, though feebly written. He was ill, he said, and for a few days, at any rate, our visit to the Museum must be deferred.

My father went to him the following morning, but returned with a countenance that told more than his words how ill he thought his friend. Day by day more unfavourable symptoms appeared; no definite disease, but a breaking-up of the constitution, which no remedies seemed able to arrest. I was with him often, for such was his particular request; and at last, at his wish and mine, I became his nurse, and was permitted to sleep in the house.

Over the mantel-piece in his bed-room hung the "Christus Consolator" of the German Art Union, one of the most beautiful conceptions of modern art.

He pointed it out to me one day, after he had become so feeble that he never left his room, and said:—

“ It belonged to her, dear Emily, who was once the light of my heart. It will be yours when I am gone. All the sorrows of life are represented there, and the refuge and cure of all! As the kneeling mother there has laid down her infant at the Saviour’s feet, so I endeavoured to lay down mine, my three sweet little ones, and her who was more to me than even they had been. And He, the Consoler, who came on earth to heal the broken-hearted, had pity also upon me, and soothed the wounds He made! My child, He is coming now, I humbly hope, to give deliverance to the captive, and to set the prisoner free!”

The divine and mysterious union was at length dissolved! The corporeal frame, so wonderfully and beautifully made, was parted from the immortal spirit—the one returned to dust, and the other to the God who gave it, and for me, on earth, my god-father had no longer an existence. Henceforth I must look forward to that land, wherever it may be, where “ divided households re-unite.”

I do not care to dwell upon the depression to which the loss of one who had gradually become the *confidante* of all my thoughts and aspirations gave rise; but a comfort sprang suddenly and unexpectedly out of that sorrow, which gave a new character to my life.

We returned home, all of us grieved, but I lonely

besides, in spite of all the kindness of both my parents ; for it still remained a fact that my mother had never thoroughly opened her heart to me, and some mysterious restraint still constantly prevented my giving utterance to the full tide of my feelings and thoughts. There was still some forbidden ground on which I feared unawares to tread. But this bar between us was now to be removed, once and for ever.

One winter evening, after our return from that sad visit to London which I have just described, and when I was sitting alone with my mother, (my father being accidentally absent,) we fell into talking over the past. She spoke about my loss and regrets so tenderly and kindly, and seemed so thoroughly to understand what I felt, that all my usual caution in talking to her gave way, and, laying aside the pencil I had been using, I sat down on a stool at her feet, and unburdened my heart of a thousand sorrowful thoughts and misgivings, which I had till then kept quite to myself.

“ Mother,” said I, at last, “ I will tell you something I am so sorry for, that I hardly dare to think about it.”

She bent forward, and looked anxiously at me as I spoke, and I found it difficult to go on. But at last, in a half whisper, I proceeded to tell her how that having, as she knew, no likeness of Mr. Darcy, I had often wished to obtain even the slightest outline of his face during his illness, but that the appearance of suffering and weakness had always prevented me from making the attempt. That *after-*

wards, however, ("you know what I mean," I added,) he looked just as he used to do in old times, and one day, when I had been allowed to go in by myself, and sit there for a time, it had come into my head that I would draw the kind face, as it lay there before me in the placid composure of death. That I had tried, but almost immediately fainted, a horrible idea having crossed my mind that there was something sacrilegious about what I was doing. "Mother," murmured I in conclusion, burying my face in her lap, and putting my arms round her, "you remember the servants finding me, and my never being allowed to be in the room alone again? So I never was able to do what I wished; but what I want you to tell me is, that the attempt was not wrong. Oh! do tell me that it was not wrong, if you can!"

No answer came to my entreaty, and when I lifted up my head to know the cause, oh! what a look of agony did I behold on my poor mother's face. Her eyes were shut, and she was labouring for self-control. My startled movement roused her, and then pressing my arm with a heavy gripe, to prevent my noticing her, or exclaiming, she got slowly up from her chair, went to a cabinet, unlocked a drawer, and brought from thence a drawing-case, with which in her hand she resumed her seat, and once more pressing my arm with a gesture enforcing silence, covered her face with her hand, while she struggled to regain some degree of composure.

Motionless and quiet, I know not what I thought, while I sat there on the stool before her with averted head. But I remember hearing the convulsive breathing, which had threatened to burst into hysterical weeping, gradually subside into a calm; and then I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder, and heard a nearly inaudible voice whisper:—

“ Look, Emily ! ”

I turned—I looked ! and life has no memory more deeply engraven on my heart than what I then saw ! Before me, partly supported by the little table at my mother’s side, and partly held by her trembling hands, were three delicately pencilled, but unmistakable and clearly-defined drawings.

Drawings of the dead ! Drawings of children—drawings of her own lost little ones, and by her own hand ! The conviction was instantaneous. Ah ! death was stamped not only in the recumbent position, but in the languid little arms : not only in the closed eyes, but in the over-weighted head, so plainly laid down on a pillow from which it was never, never in this world, to rise again ! Vain colouring of the cheeks and lips ! it meant nothing, but that suffering was over, and Nature had resumed her rights for that brief period before dissolution began !

There were two, almost infants, laid side by side in one picture ; poor little boys, with the round cheeks and dimpled arms of babyhood, asleep after their sorrows, in the deepest and sweetest repose. The other two drawings were of older children, and both were girls, my lost sisters, of whom I had

dreamt so much. I could see what they were like now. I could see the grave thoughtfulness on the older and more attenuated features of one, and the almost smile that seemed to be breaking on the lips of the other, through many a sunny curl that hung over the tender little face.

For some reason or other—perhaps because of the joyous nature I traced there, so different from my own—this last sight completely overcame me. I felt a horrible strain coming over my brain as I gazed at that child, and took in the idea of its own mother having in the midst of the fiery ordeal of her woe, preserved the memory of that happy face from oblivion.

“ Take them away ! cover them up ! hide them ! ” I called out to my mother, turning away, and shutting my eyes.

I was seized with one of those panics from which my childhood had never been quite free ; but a fond embrace from my poor mother, and a long kiss on my forehead, broke the spell, and Nature was merciful at last, as I took refuge in the arms of her who had suffered so much, and for my sake had opened her wounds afresh.

By my bed-side that night my mother sat, and talked with me of the departed—their little ways, and childish characters and manner, and how they sickened, and passed away. How, too, she would not recall them now, not for all that could be offered her, even were she able to do so. They were but gone before, forming a link of hope connecting her

with the future, and were to her a means of realizing it. Thus it should ever be with the departed.

Yes, my mother was serene and happy even in thinking of them, and it was scarcely a merit now, she said with a smile—for in my love and tenderness the measure of her comfort was full, and she had nothing more to wish for.

From that day forward an intimacy of association connected us together which rarely takes place between parent and child, and which naturally cannot take place in large families, where love is spread equally over many loving hearts. And in those profoundly happy, but serious years of my girlhood, my character was formed. So strongly, too, was the sense of my vocation impressed upon my mind, that I do not once recollect, when in the company of gayer and more light-hearted companions of my own age, wishing that I could exchange feelings or situations with them. I liked their mirth, and enjoyed their anticipations of varied pleasure, and could enter into those pleasures myself. But I always returned back again, with even a fresh zest, to the deep romance of my own life; to that mother who was at once my guardian and my charge; and to those pursuits which, from the thoughts I had connected with them, had such a powerful interest for me. And I feel sure now, in looking back over the past, that to the unusual seriousness of my lot may, in a great measure, be attributed both my appreciation of art, and whatever success I had in pursuing it.

The light-hearted may smile at the sentiment, but even great beauty, which would seem to be a charm open to everyone, can only be fully realized by the grave and thoughtful.

Perhaps this fact may be a trifling indication of a great truth. Perhaps joy is never the portal through which we can hope to pass into that inner life which is alone worth the study and interest of immortal beings. Perhaps nothing, even of sublunary pursuits, can be perfected or understood but through the mysterious tenderness taught by acquaintance with the graver thoughts which border upon grief.

In mourning, therefore, and alone, in the spring of the following year, (for an accident prevented my parents accompanying me,) I went to the British Museum. How grand and imposing is the approach! Even the little lions that ornament the outer railings of the footpath have a meaning, and are admirably placed; and as I passed through the massy gold-ornamented gates, leaving the so-called world behind me, to enter the world of science, art, and antiquity, my very spirit seemed to rise with emotion.

It was a "private day," and having ascended the steps and entered the hall, that fact was notified to me by an official. I was going to the Print Room, I said. The man made a something between a bow and a nod of acquiescence, and I went on.

Ay! on I went, slowly and almost solemnly, for now I had time at my command, and it was like communing with the dead to move about among

those vast relics of Nineveh's grandeur, and, if one may so call it, barbarous civilization. On I went, till I came again to the magnificent saloon where the gigantic deities of Egypt sit aloft, out of mortal reach, impressive to an unaccountable extent by the force of mere size—a vain attempt, as it would seem, of the human mind, to get at the idea of a superior being through an unlimited increase of brute strength.

Grimly beautiful in their repose, Lord Prudhoe's granite lions met my eye as I moved along the saloon; and how proud I felt as I noticed here and there an official, with his long white wand, who seemed quite to understand that I had private business in the place, and never interfered with my advance.

I now passed through the folding-doors at the end of the saloon, and commenced the ascent of the staircase that led to the mummy-room, and excited by the thought of what I had once seen in walking through it before, I went by even the door of the Print Room itself, in order to indulge myself for a time with a glance at the dead who lay embalmed above. Those dead, thousands of years old, yet visible to mortal eye!

“*Son of man, can these bones live?*” appeared to echo in my ears as I stood by one of the glass-cases containing a woman's form, from the extremity of which some of the cerements had been torn, so that the brown skeleton feet protruded.

“*Son of man, can these bones live?*” and I answered, “*Oh, Lord God, Thou knowest!*” Shall

the day ever come when these priests of Isis and Osiris, these daughters of the departed Pharaohs, shall awake from their magic trance, and become realities of immortal beings?—shall throw off these bandages of death?—shall be changed, and rise incorruptible, having put on immortality? And at the thought of this solemn truth a strange fancy seized me, and as once before I had day-dreamt of the door opening, and my dead brothers and sisters walking in alive before me, so now I pictured to myself the inhabitants of all those glass-cases breaking through the long sleep of ages, and waking in that room, wondering at what they saw, at where they were, and at nothing more than at me, the daring girl, in my strange, unknown, and, to them, barbaric dress, staring at them!

Lightly as I had ascended the stairs before, I went down now still more quickly, and pulling out the ivory knob, of which I had thought so much, waited for the opening of the enchanted door.

All was realized; but, alas! for me the days of wonder had passed away, and I walked calmly up to the man who stood at the end of the passage, and to whom I gave a card which explained my visit. He left me to communicate with the officer of the room, and soon after I was regularly, and with much courtesy, admitted, and asked what I would like to see.

Yes! the voices that spoke were all tuned to that subdued key my godfather had described, and I involuntarily fell into it myself. I moved also with

suppressed tread, and was thankful when the official motioned me to a seat, and, gently pushing back some desks which stood before me on the table, made room for the reception of whatever folio I might ask to see.

A glance round the place showed me everywhere massy mahogany bookshelves with glass-doors, wherein reposed the huge volumes that contained the treasures so precious in my godfather's eyes. The vast quantity was overwhelming; but I murmured out something about "Claudes," which seemed to be understood at once, for one of the glass-doors was immediately unlocked, a folio case was placed before me and opened, and I was directed not to disarrange the order of the drawings.

I promised obedience to the softly-hinted command, an almost unnecessary precaution in my case, for I was half afraid of touching the contents of the book, even to turn them over. But my friend had returned to his place, and I took courage. Seated in his recess window, he was occupied in arranging prints, and I was left to myself.

Here, then, I was at last, with the original drawings of the old masters in my hands, in my godfather's London paradise! That drawing of Michael Angelo's, of which he had talked so much, at the back of which was an unfinished sonnet, with a list of rhymes for its composition in the corner, I could never see, for it formed one of the collection which a foreigner purchased from the executors of Sir Thomas Lawrence; but I could realize Rubens, at

any rate, as a man, and no myth, when I came upon one of his representations of water overhung by trees, underneath which he had noted down the observation that, "shadows reflected in water are darker than the shadows themselves."

I did nothing but look at the works of various masters the first day, but soon grew bold enough to express a wish to make some copies. There was no objection or difficulty whatever; an attendant came forward immediately, and placing the drawing I had chosen in a desk, protected by a glass front, closed it, and left me to my fate.

It was not a Claude, it was a Backhuysen that I first attempted, a little stormy sea-piece, done upon the linen paper which may still be procured from the fly-leaves of old books. How such an extent of subject was given so effectively upon a space not exceeding three inches in height, seemed marvellous.

My godfather's rule, too, was almost more than observed. The horizontal line was placed even less than a third of the way up the picture, and thus the limit allowed for the sea was scarcely an inch. But in that narrow compass, and with only tints of brown and grey, there were, owing to the exquisite perspective of the drawing, miles and miles of distance.

In the ship which was most in the foreground, many of the lines had been drawn with a pen, which gave clearness and precision to the effect; but this was no novelty to me, as I had learnt from my godfather to attempt the same thing, both with ink and sepia.

Small as it was, how brilliantly the movement of

the vessel was given ! How she cut her way through the waves, with her tiny sails filled with wind ! The air-tone of the whole as breezy as if months of labour had been bestowed in producing the effect. The clouds, too ! How exactly they looked as one has seen them look a hundred times on such gusty, uncertain days ! the sunshine breaking out behind an accidental mass of gloom !

As I gazed, I almost felt to participate in the artist's triumph at having made this mere morsel of paper bear witness to his genius and power.

“ Wonderful ! ” I repeated to myself, as my godfather had often done in speaking of these drawings ; and sat down to the exquisite relic, feeling to the depths of my heart what a “ miserable imitation ” my copy must be.

And thus the London paradise became to me also, during our stay of many weeks, the resource of all my leisure hours. I went to the exhibitions of modern art, it is true, with others, and yielded them more admiration than my godfather had perhaps ever done ; but it was at the Print Room at the British Museum that I found, as far as my personal feelings were concerned, the home and resting-place of art. Was I prepossessed by my godfather's opinions ? They had directed my taste, no doubt, and his death had invested them with an almost sacredness in my estimation. I seemed to hold communion with him once more, while I felt as he would have felt, and judged by the sentiments that guided him. He had told the little girl she would

not forget him *there*, and the almost woman had made good the prophecy. Nevertheless, I had studied nature too long not to have an opinion of my own; and it was not the hallucination of affection alone which made me think I found among those drawings the truth and poetry of nature combined.

And now, is it too much to suggest, in conclusion, that a greater attention to the Italian and German styles, in the *drawing* part of art especially, would do much to disabuse young minds of that dangerous delusion, which all my story has been directed to expose, viz. that bold "handling," brilliant colouring, and startling effects, will make amends for want of accuracy and care, and the close study of nature? I think not, for when we see with our own eyes that Michael Angelo could condescend to elaborate some of his sublime conceptions, with a crayon as finely pointed, and as minutely exercised as that of an engineer; and when we trace in the few exquisite bits of Ruysdael that are left to us, and in all his etchings, an almost feminine delicacy of touch, combined with a power of expression quite as remarkable as the delicate finish, would it not make the most hardy of off-hand students stop to enquire whether he was indeed in the right road?

Let him look over these drawings then, and judge for himself. Let him examine dispassionately the works not of one or two only, but of any of those whose names are classic in art. Nowhere, I will venture to say, will he find any justification for the substitution of *dash* for *labour*—nowhere boldness at

the expense of accuracy of detail. Everywhere, on the contrary, strong evidences of the most minute and elaborate study of nature, whether in the human figure or in landscape.

I know that people have still misgivings on this point;—still!—in spite of the rise of photography, and modern pre-Raphaelitism. I have heard it argued that we do not see nature so minutely, when we look at her in a landscape, as these Dutch masters would have us believe and represent.

That the branches and leaves of trees, for instance, are not particularized to us as we cast our eyes over them. That it is only the *general effect* we are conscious of, and, therefore, that anything which gives us the general effect of a tree is actually *more* like what we really see than the fiddle-faddle of details, of which we know nothing without close examination.

Logically the argument is worthless; because, as the general effect of the tree in nature is produced from its assembled details, there can be no reason why we should not attempt the same process in art. But there was a time in my life when I might, I confess, have had some difficulty in proving my own convictions theoretically. The other view, although a fallacy, is such a plausible one!

At the present day, however, there is no need for argument, and theoretical proofs one way or the other. A good photographic landscape is a practical answer to the dispute; and this will become more and more evident the more the photographic art is practised and improved.

My own impression at the first sight of a landscape exhibition of this sort in London was, that the old masters had come to life again in the new mechanical invention. With all its manifold imperfections on its head, its dinginess, and blotches, and black skies, and bad lights, there remained the unmistakable fact that Nature herself had come to her own rescue; and, in the teeth of all the prejudices and theories of modern art, was showing us that a tree, made up of the most minute and correct details, was actually more like a tree in nature than the free-and-easy blots, and general effects which had for years been offered to our admiration. If looked at through a large magnifying glass, (the most conclusive of all tests,) the truth of this statement becomes more and more evident. But there was no novelty in the discovery. The Dutch masters had come to the right conclusion long ago, if we would but have believed them; as all those who are acquainted with the works of Ruysdael, Waterloo, &c. are aware of. Ruysdael's oaks are photographic oaks—oaks in detail, nature's oaks—not apologies for oaks in the shape of a splash of colour, or a mass of straight-lined shading. How I triumphed at this unanswerable confirmation of the views so carefully impressed on my mind by my godfather, the reader will easily judge; and I would add that I know of few better exercises for a young artist than to make copies of stems and branches, and in some cases even of foliage of trees, from these curious sun-drawings themselves. Judgment, of course, must be

exercised in the selection of subjects; for scarcely any photographic landscapes are as yet free from many flaws and imperfections; the result of as yet imperfect mechanical management.

As to pre-Raphaelitism, as it is called, it will readily be supposed that I from the first clung to it, as the school of hope and promise; the reaction which would raise us from slipshod incorrectness into something recognizable as real. And that its disciples have taught us an invaluable lesson is undeniable. Their laborious accuracy, their earnestness, their "boundless love and patience," as Mr. Ruskin words it, are worthy of our warmest admiration; and we shall do well, not only to follow the good example so set us, but to acknowledge it candidly.

What will be their own fate hereafter, as a school, is another matter, and one very difficult to foresee. They are sadly apt to sin against perspective and possibility, owing, perhaps, to their having been tempted, in reviving what was admirable in the ancient style, to imitate its grotesque errors and unrealities also. But whenever they have done this, they have committed a grievous mistake, for nothing in art can be really powerful and enduring that is not based upon nature and truth. Even our highest ideal is but the best chosen of truths.

The modern pre-Raphaelites have, moreover, coupled their careful detail, somewhat unnecessarily with minuteness of size, and as long as they do so, they can never lay claim to the highest place. The Rubens gallery at the Manchester Exhibition might

surely have taught them better ; but they are essentially mannerists, and as such wedded to particular ideas, and difficult to move.

Whether they will ever break away from this bondage, into a grandeur as great as their mechanical skill, and cease to be either manneristic, minute, or grotesque, remains to be proved. Their very taste at present seems to hang by a thread between the false and the true.

But meantime our debt of gratitude remains the same. They and photography between them, are helping to cure us of a deep-seated evil. Let us hope they will succeed in doing so, without involving us in another.

I would remark in conclusion that such a collection as that at the British Museum presents one more advantage, the value of which is almost incalculable. The great variety of styles that can be studied and copied there affords the best possible cure for that disease of art—mannerism—to which I have lately alluded as one of the tendencies of pre-Raphaelitism. Not that it can be pretended the artist ever lived who could altogether avoid the failing. It is perhaps a fatal necessity of acquiring mechanical skill that we become apt to give everything the same mechanical treatment.

But this ought to be considered an evil which we are bound to struggle against as far as possible ; and those who study and copy the endless varieties of “ method ” to be found in different schools, are of course far less likely to be victims of man-

nerism than if they took only one master for their guide. Besides which, how encouraging it is to find that there are many ways, equally good, of giving the same description of subject. How satisfactory to know that there is no necessity to be trammelled by any sort of style, however good !

Let the young artist, then, who may be disposed to worship Claude, turn from him to Hollar's sketches of the Dutch towns, then go on to the landscapes of the daring and romantic Reidiger, or the fine pencilling of Schneyder and Vandervelde ; and when he has concluded, by a peep at the woodland scenery of our own countryman, Strutt, he will, I suspect, be ready to throw aside all idolatry of manner—to go out into Nature herself, and adapt his style to her different aspects, however various they may be.

Following the sadly too common plan of working in only one method, a man may certainly, at last, acquire such facility as to be able to execute whole pictures without troubling himself even to look out of doors ; and any idea of representing what he has *seen* becomes absolutely unnecessary, he being able, as he thinks, to imagine something a great deal better. Like a once celebrated drawing-master, of whom it is related, that being asked whether one of his landscapes was from nature, he exclaimed, offended, “ *Nature? No, no! Thank goodness I got beyond that long ago!* ”

The young Italian apprentice* who spent his days from dawn to midnight in the open air, watching

* Claude.

Nature through all her changes and effects, must have thought very differently from this. And to his different thinking may, perhaps, be owing the undying immortality which belongs to his name !

* * * * *

Dear reader, out of these fragments of my childhood in art gather up something worthy of remembrance. Believe that there is much more to be gained from art than mere mechanical dexterity. Believe that through it, as through the touches of music, the soul can find expression ; and that then, and then only, can it move the feelings of others, and give real delight to the originator. Believe that it is its privilege, as well as its true province, to move the affections, rouse the intellect, and raise the aspirations of man. The appeal may be made even through the simplest form of God's beautiful inanimate creation, as in landscape ; through the mere innocence of babyhood, as well as through the delineations of beauty, or intellect ; or, higher still, through the embodiment of events in history or fiction, which excite noble sentiments, by the exhibition of actions or sufferings worthy of record, example, or love. I have named these *defences*, if I may so call them, in the choice of subjects, because there would be a sin in allowing young students to suppose that the finest painting can ever redeem a bad subject, or make it justifiable as an effort of art.

Small credit is due to the man who records on canvas the degradation of his species ; or endeavours by any representation to awaken the evil passions of

our nature, however skilfully it may be done. It is profaning, to the purposes of Satan, a gift, which, like all other gifts, comes from the hands of the Almighty, and for the use of which we shall most certainly be held accountable hereafter.

Believe also that the impulses towards the pursuit of the arts and sciences are not given without an object, and then you will learn not only to value them as methods of wiling away time, but to love them as occupations destined, if rightly used and viewed, to elevate and soften the thoughts and character. Calculated also to lead us, by many a sweet and pleasant by-path, to the love and worship of Him who has filled the earth with marvels and beauties, and our souls with the endless thirst of finding them out. And believe it *not*, oh ! young reader, should anyone whisper that a father's or a husband's home need be rendered less happy by the fact that those who share it with them have pursuits which engage a portion of their affections and interests. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," is an order not confined to any particular class.

Only follow all pursuits so as to refine the heart, instead of feeding the vanity, and you cannot be too earnest in your work. They will add a charm and grace in days of sunshine to whatever home it may be your lot to fill ; and they will form a resource in days of care ; whilst they will be at all times, if you have rightly considered them, a link between you and futurity.



THE DULL WATERING-PLACE.

“ He brought an eye for all he saw.”

TENNYSON. “ *In Memoriam.*”

NOT to Hastings, dear Aunt Margaret, anywhere but there!” exclaimed a tall young girl to a lady, who was reclining in an easy-chair by the fire one evening, studying “Bradshaw’s Railway Guide” with much attention.

“And why not to Hastings, Eleanor?” asked her aunt. “I should have thought it just the kind of place you would particularly like.”

“Oh! how can you say so?” said the young lady, rather reproachfully. “Don’t you remember what the people who were here last week said about it?—That it was the dullest place they ever were at in their lives. They called it *insufferably* dull. I remember the expression perfectly, for I pictured to myself immediately what a misfortune it would be to live there.”

“It was a very alarming idea, I admit,” remarked Aunt Margaret, laughing. “But who were those

people, Eleanor? for, to tell you the truth, I have quite forgotten all about them. Stay a moment, though! I think I know whom you mean. Lady Charlotte Lennox and her daughter—eh?”

“Yes, Aunt. And have you really forgotten what they said about that wretched Hastings?”

“Quite, Eleanor; but you have not, so tell me all about it. I am just now in a pleasant, dreamy condition, in which listening is particularly agreeable. What did they say?”

“They said the place was so stupid, it was impossible to say *how* stupid, and so low, too!—absolutely vulgar——.”

“I wonder whether Lady Charlotte Lennox and her daughter ever learnt the Lord’s Prayer, the Belief, and the Ten Commandments in the *vulgar* tongue,” interrupted Aunt Margaret, with her eyes shut.

“Aunt, you are half asleep, and yet laughing,” said Eleanor. “I wish I had not told you about the ‘vulgar,’ for I remember how you dislike the word. But never mind about that. They explained that Hastings really was a most uninteresting place—that there was nobody there—that there was nothing to be seen there—nothing to do—nothing going on; in short, ‘insufferably dull’ comprehended the whole.”

“And a frightful whole, too!” exclaimed Aunt Margaret, putting her hands over her ears, as if to shut out the sound. “Not a word more, I implore you, my dear child. I would not take you to such a place as you have described for ‘all the world,

neither would I go there myself; I should be miserable; and as for your poor uncle—still, to be sure, *he* would take his occupation with him—but such a place is not to be thought of. Dear me!” continued Aunt Margaret, after a short pause, “how Hastings must have altered since I was there! The Butlers and Sweetloves lived there then. But I dare say they are dead and gone now, and everything is changed.”

“Who were the Butlers and Sweetloves, Aunt Margaret?” enquired Eleanor. “Two families that you knew?”

“Yes, my dear.”

“Nice ones, Aunt?”

“Very amusing ones, my dear.”

“I wish they were there now,” sighed Eleanor.

“I should wish so, too,” observed Aunt Margaret, “if we were going to Hastings; but if we are not, it cannot much signify who lives there, I should think.”

Aunt Margaret spoke this very slowly, for she really was getting very sleepy indeed.

“My dear Aunt, do have a nap,” cried Eleanor, “and I will wake you at the end of half-an-hour.”

“Thank you, dear, I really think I must; so good-night for a little bit;” and so saying, Aunt Margaret shut her eyes, and was soon fast asleep.

Eleanor gazed for a few moments at the fire; then she got up and lit a candle and opened a book, but she discovered that she was unable to read, her thoughts were so unsettled. She was thinking

about what Lady Charlotte Lennox had said. She had found, in the course of repeating it to her aunt, that it sounded very silly and unmeaning, and she began to wonder whether Lady Charlotte Lennox's opinion was correct or not. She wondered very much, too, who the Butlers and Sweetloves were, whom her aunt thought such amusing people; whether they really were dead and gone, or not; whether Lady Charlotte Lennox knew them or not: but *that* she could find out from Miss Lennox next time she saw her. She felt sure her aunt had been laughing to herself, and she wondered why.

And so she went on with her thoughts and wonderings, but not in perfect idleness, by any means, for she had taken up that great resource of women, needlework, when the thinking-fit came on; so she sat hemming, as well as thinking, for at least half-an-hour; at the end of which time she began to long to talk again; and after looking at her aunt several times, she at last addressed her:—

“ Aunt Margaret ! ”

“ My dear—yes—are you there ? ” asked Aunt Margaret awaking.

“ I have been here ever since, Aunt, working away, and thinking about Lady Charlotte Lennox and Hastings.”

“ Oh, do forget them as fast as possible, there's a good girl ! ” cried Aunt Margaret, rousing up. “ What *can* be the use of thinking about anything so ‘ insufferably dull ’ as—*Hastings*, I suppose I meant to say,” added she, with a smile, “ not Lady

Charlotte Lennox, of course! Nay, my dear, you need not look at me so enquiringly. I am not in the habit of calling either people or places ‘insufferably dull.’ Everything and everybody has an interesting side, even ——. But, come! let us forget all about it, and do you take the ‘Bradshaw’ and amuse yourself by looking out for another place to go to.”

And so saying, Aunt Margaret leant back in her chair once more.

Eleanor took the “Bradshaw,” and opened the map, and read to herself a number of names; but, of course, this was all she could do.

“There’s no use in my reading a quantity of names,” she observed at last, in rather a deplorable voice; “I know nothing about any of the places: I wish I did. Don’t *you*, Aunt? I feel sure, indeed, that you must. You must have been to other places on the south coast besides that tiresome Hastings. How sleepy you look! but you really must not go to sleep again, for my uncle will be coming back soon to tea. Do wake up, and give me a description of some other places.”

“You are very ingenious, Eleanor,” replied Aunt Margaret; “but supposing that I were to do what you ask, and enchant you by a description of some place I like, and then that to-morrow another Lady Charlotte Lennox were to call and tell you it was as ‘insufferably dull’ as Hastings, and *so* stupid—she couldn’t tell *how* stupid—what should you do?”

Eleanor laughed.

“ Now you are bringing back the conversation to Lady Charlotte Lennox yourself, Aunt ! ”

“ So I am, I declare ! ” said Aunt Margaret ; “ but I had no intention of doing so. It is because I am half asleep, I should think.”

“ Not a bit of it, Aunt ! You are shamming now, for I see you can hardly help smiling all the time. So do begin and tell me a long story about some nice place or other, to put—you know what—out of my head.”

“ Well, but on one condition, Eleanor,” said Aunt Margaret.

“ What is it, Aunt ? ”

“ Why, that if you *really* like and believe my description, you do not take a dislike to the place from any other people’s remarks about it.”

“ Indeed I will not.”

“ Good ! Now, then, take up your work and listen very attentively, for I am going to be very exact and correct ; and you may ask me any questions you please, as we go along, only I shall not tell you the name of the place just yet.”

“ This is charming ! ” exclaimed Eleanor, seating herself very near the easy-chair in which her aunt was once more leaning back, as if determined to be as near going to sleep as possible.

“ Are you ready, Eleanor ? ”

Aunt Margaret’s eyes were shut.

“ Ready and waiting,” laughed her niece.

“ Well, then,” said she, looking round with pleasure at the good-natured smile that lit up her eager

niece's face, "once upon a time there was a beautiful old town, in the midst of which stood a venerable ruined castle ——."

"*Dover*, Aunt!" shouted Eleanor, as quick as lightning.

"As you please, my dear. I thought I had protested against telling the name at present."

"I beg your pardon, dear Aunt, but I feel that it *must* be *Dover*; and I am so much pleased, I don't know what to do. We shall see Shakespeare's Cliff,—and the French coast, and, perhaps,—oh, perhaps, Aunt,—actually, don't you think my uncle will consent to make a trip across the Channel and touch French soil, and if so ——."

"Good-night, Eleanor," interrupted Aunt Margaret.

"Aunt!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"What, my dear? You don't want me, I am sure. You are telling all the story yourself."

"No, no, no! I won't speak again; only why *did* you talk about the old castle?"

"Because there *is* an old castle at the place I mean."

"Pray go on, Aunt; I will be as quiet as possible."

"Well, then, this old ruined castle stands on the top of a high cliff; and the high cliff faces that grandest sight of nature—the everlasting ocean; so that it is quite a wonder to me that the warders, who, in olden times, used to walk up and down the battlements, and blow their horns amidst the roar of the waves, and often through the howling of the tempest, did not one and all become illustrious poets."

Eleanor smiled, and laid her finger on her lips, enjoining silence on herself. Aunt Margaret answered her look.

“ I dare say you would like to know whether the castle is a beautiful one now, Eleanor. No! there are but a few imperfect traces of it left. No decay, however, can alter the grandeur of the situation; and as you look down from those fine heights, imagination can do as much, or more for you, perhaps, than the reality would have done; for certain it is, that in the days when castles were in their most romantic and magnificent state, neither the owners nor the warders took the picturesque and poetical view of them that you and I do now.”

“ How was that, I wonder? ”

“ It is difficult to say, only we know that as

‘ Distance lends enchantment to the view,’

so it softens down all the asperities and deficiencies which disturb the perfection of every scene we contemplate closely. Looked at from afar, we see nothing but the romantic features of those early days of civilization; whereas the practical working of them may have been so rough and harsh, that neither poetry nor romance had a chance of flourishing among them.

“ Certainly, as regards my old castle, we must content ourselves with what it was rather than what it is; for it is a very tumble-down affair, indeed; and then a somewhat unromantic fate has befallen those venerable remains of former grandeur. They

have been turned into tea-gardens by the ingenious inhabitants of the place.”

Eleanor uttered an exclamation at the idea of such a desecration.

“ Ay, that’s all very well, my dear,” observed Aunt Margaret, “ viewing the thing romantically ; but now, Eleanor, let us take a peep at the other side of the picture ; what you would be inclined to call the merely practical side. Think, now, of the comfort and pleasure those tea-gardens afford to quantities of people who work hard the greater part of their lives, and only now and then get a holiday in which to enjoy themselves. Many and many a gay party spend an evening of happiness on that beautiful spot, who would otherwise never have seen it, except, perhaps, once in their lives, just to walk round it, staring at the untidy, and, to them, unintelligible remains of antiquity, with vacant faces and puzzled minds. If even the old possessors of the castles themselves never viewed them through a poetic halo, how can you expect the working millions of a decidedly unpoetical state of society to do so ? But no matter. The place is comfortable, free from nettles, and nicely kept, and the tea-arbours are as snug as little birds’-nests ; open, too, only to the southern sun and sea ; and Darby and Joan sit there in unlimited enjoyment, sipping their cup of bohea, while their little ones climb about the ruins and fancy themselves wandering heroes, or fancy nothing at all but delight. And to tell you the truth, Eleanor, I suspect that could we get far enough from such a

scene, to view it through the true romantic haze, we should look upon it as almost a more poetical and more touching phase of castle life than even the old knight-and-warder times. Then, too, look what an original idea even for us, to be drinking tea in a tea-arbour, amidst the ruins of an ancient fortress !”

“ Not a word of joke, dear Aunt,” cried Eleanor. “ Your picture is a real one, and there is real poetry about it. I fancy I see the jovial little parties you talk of, and—and—feel dreadfully ashamed of myself for always thinking first and foremost of some nonsense of my own.”

“ Your thoughts were natural ones in this case, my dear ; that is to say,” added Aunt Margaret, smiling, “ natural for a young lady fresh from reading romances and poetry. But now you perceive the truth of what I was saying before ; namely, that everything, and everybody, and every place (with perhaps the one exception of Lady Charlotte Lennox’s *bête noir*, Hastings), has an interesting side to it. If you do not see it, the fault is more likely to be in you than in the thing looked at. At scenes such as I have described, the Lady Charlotte Lennoxes of the world would turn up their pretty noses in disgust. Yet it is from scenes such as these that the Goldsmiths and Lambs gather materials for their most beautiful essays and most affecting descriptions. But I am weary, Eleanor. We have had enough of the old castle. You shall descend with me now to the town and the Parade.”

“ No, do spare me the Parade, Aunt !” cried

Eleanor. "I know you are very skilful; but how can anybody make a Parade interesting? Parades, at all events, are not to my taste."

"You are very troublesome, my dear," remarked Aunt Margaret. "But you really must go my way, and my way leads along the Parade to the fishing-boats."

"The fishing-boats, by all means, Aunt."

"Very well. But the Parade lies *en route*, and let me tell you there is a great deal to be learnt there."

"Oh, about how to dress, and how to hold oneself, I suppose you mean, Aunt. Pray go quick over that part. It may be very necessary to know, but it cannot be interesting."

"You are the worst guesser to-day that I ever listened to, Eleanor; I really had no thought about such matters, for I question if my Parade be a very first-rate school for such accomplishments. No, my dear child; my remembrances of what is to be learnt on the Parade are of a very different kind. Look! I shut my eyes and recollect; and now I see before me on that straight, stiff walk, two Bath chairs, drawn slowly along, one behind the other, by chairmen. And, as if it were only yesterday, I recall the pang that shot through my heart when, glancing at those chairs as I passed them, I beheld in them two sisters: costume—size—age—so nearly, if not exactly the same, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other. Alas! and the same fell disease was evidently at work upon them both! It had robbed their cheeks of bloom

and wasted their flesh, and sunk their large, dark, melancholy eyes. It was only on warm sunny days they ventured out, and then always together, and in that manner. I never saw father or mother with them, and they were no longer girlishly young. It was a piteous sight, and yet this was but one among many of a similar description. What do you think of my Parade now, Eleanor?"

The tears stood in Eleanor's eyes as she answered, "It must be a very melancholy place; I cannot think how you can like it!"

"I did not say *I liked it* exactly," replied Aunt Margaret, now sitting upright in her chair; "but I *dislike* a great deal more the morbid fastidiousness which makes people run away from these so-called sad realities of life, as if they had nothing to do with them! Illness and death are the certain lot of all of us, at *some* period of our lives; and I really think we are shutting our eyes to what may be justly called a 'means of grace,' if we uniformly cross over to the other side, when any of these examples of our common mortality cross our path."

"But you can hardly call it their crossing our path if we go to a place where we know invalids are sent," expostulated Eleanor.

"Then, my dear, we must at once give up all thought of going to a fine warm climate ourselves; for wherever that great blessing is to be met with, there assuredly will you be apt to find invalids."

"Go on, Aunt, I understand. And the soft air we go to for restoration of strength, they go to for

——.” And Eleanor covered her face with both her hands.

“ For *Euthanasia*, Eleanor, but do not be distressed. It is but the ending of the journey we are all upon, rather sooner than usual.

‘ A little earlier or later, dearest,
What matters it?’*

“ And we who live need such sights, not only to remind us of mortality, but to arouse us to gratitude for the blessing of health still allowed to ourselves. You, in the first bloom of youth and strength, may well, on looking at those fair young creatures fading away, utter a prayer of thankfulness, which would probably have been left unsaid, and even unthought, had not the painful spectacle before you warmed up in your heart the dim flame of gratitude. Ah! from day to day, we all of us, more or less, overlook daily blessings; and of none are we much more forgetful than of health.

“ My dear niece, when we think of the trivial common-places which fill our poor heads from one week’s end to another, ought we not to be really *glad* of anything which raises our ideas a peg or two higher in the scale? In short, anything which calls the hard-hearted to tenderness, the frivolous to seriousness, and all to gratitude, must be to be desired rather than to be shunned. But now I have

* “ Eine Minute früher oder später,
Was macht das aus? ”

said enough. There were many lively scenes as well as sad ones on that Parade, Eleanor. Persevering little boys with indefatigable hoops, gay ladies and gambolling children, and now and then a travelling astronomer, who, for a very small consideration, allowed you to look through a telescope at the spots on the sun, but whether the spots were on the sun, or on the glasses of his telescope, was a point very difficult of determination. Then, too, it was on the beach, close under the Parade, that any curious sights were sure to be exhibited. I remember once a huge beam of wood, three yards perhaps in length, being brought ashore covered with barnacles so thickly, that they clung to it, and hung round it, like ornamenting fringe. On another occasion there was a still greater curiosity. A large animal called a cuttle-fish—a dreadful-looking, shapeless lump of flesh, with a number of long fleshy arms, underneath which were two rows of suckers, arranged along the whole length of the arm like buttons. If you put your finger for a moment on to one of these suckers, you felt it drawn closer in, and rejoiced in withdrawing it as quickly as possible. Report said, that the cuttle-fish had power to sink a boat, by using the combined strength of all the suckers on his arms to draw it down! At all events, the beast was a very curious and frightful one, and was thought such a rarity, that the people who had taken him, pitched a tent for him on the beach, and charged sixpence admission to visitors, anxious to view him in his captured state, in a large

tub of salt water. Poor creature, he died after a two days' exhibition!

“ Now, Eleanor, I begin to be as tired of the Parade as of the Castle. So let us move on. At one end of it you descend by a flight of steps to the beach, and at once find yourself in a different world. No more ladies, either sick or gay,—no more astronomers, nor showmen. But sailors, boats, fish-mongers' stalls, nets spread out to be dried or be mended, windlasses drawn up by patient horses, men, women, and children, all busy or idle over some pursuit connected with fishing, fishing-tackle, sails, and ropes. And here I am completely puzzled what to choose for your amusement.”

“ You cannot mean that there is nothing amusing there. If you were to say so I could not believe you, Aunt.”

“ But I said nothing of the kind. On the contrary, my difficulty is, among so many interesting things, to guess which you would prefer me to talk about.”

“ All, Aunt.”

“ Ay, but there is such a thing as a choice too. For instance, if you are fond of sketching, I should never get you away from those noble dark boats, built for hard seas and rough landing, and the ear-ringed fishermen lounging about them. You would be finding more studies than a month's stay would enable you to complete, and would go into extravagant raptures over certain tall, narrow, wood-planked houses, blackened with pitch, which are run up as

a shelter for the coils of ropes and sails. The effect of these slim, dark cots, when caught in contrast either with the grey cliff or the blue sky, is so remarkable, that no one with half an artist's eye could fail to remark it. To a sketcher, therefore, I should bid good-bye for the day, if I once got one there. But how is it with you, Eleanor? Shall we go on?"

"On, at all events now, though the idea of that scene would be perfectly enough to make me long to go to the place, even if it contained nothing else, and was as stupid as Hastings."

"Good! Now, setting aside the picturesque appearance of these sailors, they are a very curious race. Their fathers were most of them genuine smugglers, and the sons in their early youth have shared in some of those forbidden adventures. Only mention the word smuggling, and you see such a curl of the lip and suppressed smile, as betray what a mine you are treading upon. I remember one who was out with your uncle and myself in a boat one day, whom your uncle encouraged and coaxed until he told us wonderful tales of his early days. Impudent escapes, and the landing of kegs of illicit spirits in spite of the utmost vigilance of a very vigilant coast-guard, who in one particular case fairly outwitted themselves. The man rowed us in sight of the very spot where the adventure happened. The smugglers had discovered that their intention of landing the spirits *somewhere* had been detected, so they sent off two or three decoy boats, with a few men in each, to different places where it

was likely they would be expected to land, and having in this manner lured away to various places the whole of the preventive staff, they made at once for the now deserted preventive station itself, a house lying in a hollow between cliffs. And there they actually landed their booty and made their way through the preventive officers' gardens, carrying the kegs triumphantly with them into the country, and actually cutting some of the best cabbages in the garden as they passed through, as a *bonne bouche* for supper! You should have seen the sailor's grin of exultation as he related this feat, and, despite all my loyalty and love of submission to constituted authority, I found myself so deeply interested for the fate of that smuggling expedition, that I breathed freer again when I found how satisfactorily successful it was."

"Oh, I don't wonder a bit, Aunt! There is surely nothing so very wrong in smuggling, after all."

"You mean that buying and selling spirits without paying duty to the king of your country is not forbidden in the Ten Commandments?—Eh, Eleanor?"

"Well, I suppose that is what I do mean. It seems to me to be quite different from any real sin, like murder."

"That is, of course, what smugglers think, and that is the argument I have heard them use in defence of their trade,—that there is nothing really wrong in it."

"Nor is there. Is there, Aunt?"

“ If we were solitary and not gregarious animals, I should say, no, too, Eleanor. But inasmuch as for mutual convenience and happiness we agree in living together under a social system, we are bound by the laws of that system even when they forbid our doing things not in themselves wrong ; that is, not expressly forbidden by the laws of God.”

“ But supposing there is injustice in thus forbidding those things, or that it was a stupid error in judgment ? ”

“ But who is to judge of that, Eleanor ? Not each individual for himself, surely ! All social systems consist of some who rule and others who obey. If you dislike the one under which you were born, you are no slave ; you are free to go away and choose another, with other rulers and laws. But wherever you pitch your tent, and receive the advantage and protection which a civilized government affords you, there you are bound, in return, to yield obedience to constituted authorities and orders. If it were free to every member of a community to pick and choose which law it suited him to obey and which to break, we should have no system at all, but universal confusion. Scarcely two neighbours in a street would agree in what they would obey and disobey, and the constitution would soon get as many black marks of disapprobation upon it as the painter’s picture.”

“ What was that, Aunt ? I have forgotten, if I ever knew.”

“ I think you must have heard the story ; it is so

old. Disgusted with the absurd criticisms of ignorant judges, an old artist once offered one of his finest paintings to public inspection, announcing that every one was at liberty to make a black charcoal cross on any part of it which he might consider faulty and wanting correction. The room was thrown open, and the painter absented himself; but, when he returned at night, the whole picture was a mass of black charcoal crosses,—not a bit of the painting could be seen! Everybody had found fault with something. If you had been the painter, how should you have felt, Eleanor?”

“In despair, I think, Aunt. Among so many people there must have been some good judges. I should really suppose the picture must have had a great many faults. Do you know how the painter felt and what he did?”

“He took a handkerchief and wiped the whole of the black charcoal crosses out, Eleanor.”

“My dear Aunt! and did not make one correction?”

“Not one. But the next day he offered the picture to public inspection once more, requesting his kind friends, the judges, to put a white chalk cross on any part of the painting which they particularly admired, and felt sure was particularly good. I need not go on. You can guess the result, I am sure, with your lively imagination.”

“Why, you don't mean, Aunt——.” And here Eleanor hesitated, and then laughed outright.

“Yes, I do, though. The picture was as white

the second night as it had been black the first; and so much for variety of opinion, Eleanor! I assure you, it would never answer to give up social systems, any more than pictures, to the chimerical whims of the multitude. And being bound to obey the laws of that particular government under which we shelter and live, we certainly do sin in breaking through those laws, even when the law is not one laid down in the Decalogue. The sin may not be of that heinous character which theft and murder are, but we must not grumble that it lays us open to temporal punishment; nor forget either, that submission to rulers is one of the virtues which our Saviour both enjoined and practised. — But, really, Eleanor, we must talk of something else. Everything makes me sleepy after a time. I am as tired now of the smugglers as I was of the old Castle and the Parade. What comes next?”

“ I don’t know, Aunt, you must tell me. You talked of fishwives and fishermen on the beach, and mending of nets, and all sorts of things.”

“ Never mind about the mending of the nets; though I think I see those boys and women with their shuttles darting, still. But they and the tall tarred houses all go into your portfolio, Eleanor. Those beautiful studies, you know, which you can hardly get done in the first month of our stay!—Ah! it has just come into my head! I thought there was something else before we left the beach.”

“ What is it, Aunt?”

“ Natural history, my dear. Some particular

branches of it however,—Shells, Sea-weeds, and Zoophytes.”

Eleanor’s countenance fell.

“ I don’t know much about those things, Aunt—only about shells. They are really beautiful.”

“ So are sea-weeds and zoophytes, Eleanor; as, indeed, is everything which God created and made, the small as well as the great. Indeed, for one reason the small *more* remarkably so than the great, because it fills the mind with a kind of wondering awe to learn that things and beings invisible to any human eyes, are formed and created with the same exquisite beauty and contrivance as those larger ones which seem more particularly adapted to adorn man’s world—the world revealed to his senses. Then, too, how interesting to compare the universal perfection of God’s works with the universal imperfection of those of man! *We* create and make, solely for ourselves—*our* range of eyesight is our measure, and we take the natural range of our senses as the guide of what is perfect and good. But look at the result! Alter the range of your sense of sight by the power of the microscope, and the finest-pointed needle that can be made becomes to all appearance an untidily-formed iron pole, with a miserably rough attempt at a polished end. Whereas the hairs on a fly’s leg, or the sting of a wasp, or the feelers of an animalcule, invisible to the naked eye, show a finish and delicacy which the utmost powers of the best microscope cannot trace into roughness. Besides, your tastes for natural history are at a particularly low

ebb when you can like nothing but *denaturalized* shells, pretty as they are !”

“ But I can’t like the other things, knowing nothing about them, Aunt.”

“ Well, then, for a few minutes let us stop here. Suppose that the smuggler’s tale is over, and that *you* have turned away to think, and *he* to finish his quid of tobacco. Suppose, too, that the wind is so high (a south wind observe, and therefore not cold), that your sketch must be suspended—what is to hinder your coming with me to shelter between two large boats that are hauled up on the shore ? Come ! there is a piece of tarpaulin lying there, and we will sit down. It will not be as dull as you suppose.”

“ I don’t expect it to be dull a bit, Aunt. I am as ready to sit there as you are. The very smell of the tar is enough to make me like it.”

“ Very well ! Then, there we are. Now, just by the edge of the tarpaulin to the left you will see a nasty mound of dirty shells. ‘ How came they there ? ’ you will ask. Thus : they were thrown over the side of the boat after she was hauled up on the beach. I suspect the sailors used the fish last night either for bait or supper. Well : they are only waiting for the next tide to wash them back into the deep.”

“ Joy go with them, my dear Aunt ! ” cried Eleanor.

“ Now, I am quite disappointed in you, Eleanor ! I thought you were fond of shells.”

“ So I am of nice polished ones, Aunt ; but not

of the nasty heaps I once before saw on a beach. They had such a dreadful smell, the very thought of it makes me sick !”

“ Ah, Eleanor !” cried Aunt Margaret : “ you have much to learn yet, I see. It is a great fact, that *naturalists have no noses*, and if you are coming to sit by me on the tarpaulin, you must leave your nose on the Parade with the well-dressed ladies who never descend the fishermen’s steps, but look upon them as little better than a plunge into Avernus.”

“ I am quite prepared, Aunt. I will leave my nose, or fix it solely on the idea of tar. Anything to come and sit with you.”

“ Well, now, those shells are great favourites of mine, so I must introduce them to you. They are called ‘ Pectens ;’ and there are two varieties of them there. Some mottled and some white, all but the raised ribs, which are a delicate pink or yellow.”

“ Why, these are the shells that used to be made into such pretty pincushions and ornaments, Aunt ?”

“ The very same.”

“ But you talked about a mound of dirty shells. I had no idea those pretty little pectens were there. How I should like to drill the holes, and try to make one of the pincushions ! How could you call those pretty shells nasty and dirty, Aunt ?”

“ Everything is nasty till it is washed, Eleanor ; such is the fate of mortality ; and our friends, the pectens, want a strong lotion from the chemist’s shop besides, before all their beauties are developed. But, for my own part, I prefer them—at least the

oldest and ugliest among them,—in their natural state, merely washing them in sea-water.”

“ Explain, Aunt.”

“ Why, those which are most disfigured by scurfy incrustations, bear on their backs some of those wonders which only a microscope can fully reveal to our eyes. But a pocket magnifier or lens can do much, and show you, that those, to the naked eye, disfiguring incrustations are actually households of little creatures, who have built themselves cells, side by side, diamond-wise, with the nicest regularity; and whose skill in ornamental cottage-building exceeds even that of bees, for in their houses there is no variety, whereas, among the creatures of whom I am speaking, different patterns of houses have prevailed ever since they were created. The microscope cannot show *us* any difference in the little creatures inhabiting the cells; but the race of *Lepraliæ*, as they are called, is divided, as it were, into classes, and each class is as particular and precise in the pattern of his house as a Highlander can be about that of his tartan! Is not this curious? There are more than forty clans of these little *Lepraliæ* on our British shores only, and there are plenty of others abroad. What do you say now to my dirty shells? Think of the thousands of little creatures—each the inhabitant of his self-built cell—living his appointed lifetime of enjoyment in his ‘dim water-world,’ on the back of the *Pecten*, who moves unconscious of his freight. Many of the *Lepraliæ* prefer building on sea-weeds rather

than shells, and many on stones, and some are so particular that it is only on one or two particular weeds they are found : a choice which, like the patterns of their cells, must of course be directed by some mysterious instinct, and proves that these minute creatures are no more forgotten by the great Creator than those who rank higher in the scale of life. Now, then, I have introduced you to a zoophyte. But we cannot stay longer with him. Neither will I, for your young naturalist's nose's sake, poke far into the mound, or doubtless I could drag out thence a small cuttle-fish ; another of the fleshy fishes of untidy shape which look so disgusting. He is, indeed, a lump of flesh, all but his mouth, which is a miniature parrot's beak, and hard and horny as that of a bird. Inside he carries about with him his bag of brown ink, which he can throw out at pleasure in the face of any enemy daring to pursue him. But you will, I am sure, prefer seeing the ink in its prepared and refined state when sold in the shops under the name of sepia."

" I should most particularly like to see it in its natural state as well," observed Eleanor. " But I am almost overpowered by the idea of all that exists in the world, unnoticed and unthought of. There seems to be almost *too* much, Aunt—it burdens one's mind."

" Why so? Why should people be so vain or mad as to do more than be happy and contented with the particular researches or occupations which Providence throws in their way, or which really at-

tract their minds? Of all mistakes none is more grievous than the rage for heaping up knowledge merely for knowledge sake;—crowding one study upon another till the heart is interested in none, and till learning becomes a burden, or a cause of conceit, instead of a resource and comfort. I wish educators generally could be brought to a right view of this subject. But in spite of these being days of civilization, refinement, and learning, we all seem to be struggling onwards, each of us to get before his neighbour, or at any rate keep up with him, as if that were the great object of human ambition; and as if the ‘hindmost’ really were doomed to perdition. Whereas this very effort is in defiance of the decrees of the Almighty, who has allotted not only different sorts of talents to different individuals, but different measures of them also.

“Would that this fact were more generally borne in mind, and acted upon; for were education directed to the cultivation of such powers as naturally exist, instead of forcing forward those of which the soil is incapable, how much absurd vanity would be suppressed; how much vain labour of ‘rising early and late taking rest’ be spared! But, come! we will leave the ‘dim water-world,’ and its inhabitants, to others, and you shall bid good-bye to the beach, and cut across, among the tall tarred rope-houses, to a pathway that runs underneath high overhanging cliffs, to a distant part of the beach. We are past the end of the town here—nay, and, shortly after, we have reached the last of the rope-houses; so now, stop and tell me what you see.”

Eleanor looked up, almost feeling as if she ought to be able to answer.

“Yes, yes,” continued her aunt, as if it had all been real; “you may turn completely round if you please, and you must look up, and then down, and then I will tell you exactly what you see. First, right opposite to you, as you stand with your back to the rock, is a tilted cart, with the shafts raised on wooden props. Yes. Nothing very wonderful in that, you say. Well, if you think so, look again. Take another turn, and look *up* this time. Now, you are standing with your back to the tilted cart and your face to the rocky cliff. Do you see nothing? Nothing! You shake your head. Look a little higher—up the cliff—higher—higher still. Ay! Now you’ve caught it, for I see you smile. You have caught sight of a window with actual panes of glass and woodwork in the rock, level with the rock, ever so high up.”

“You are getting a little romantic, I think,” cried Eleanor, half thinking her aunt was making fun of her.

“I have been romantic all my life, I hope,” observed Aunt Margaret, with a smile; “but here I have a reality as well as a romance. By looking steadily upward, you perceive that, at a short distance below the window, there is a jutting ledge of rock, like a pathway; and all at once this fact is verified by a human figure appearing upon it. He came out of a dark-looking fissure to the right of the window, and now he is actually walking along that

ledge of rock I spoke of ; and now, if he is not standing there with a long broom in his hand, sweeping off the dust and dirt from the narrow pathway that stretches like a rocky shelf across the cliff, more than half-way up its high and precipitous side ! And, after the sweeping is over, you may see him walking up and down the ledge with a placid air, looking over the sea, and evidently observing what ships are in the offing, for he is studying them through his telescope. There is a Parade for you, Eleanor ! Quite a different sort of thing from the other one.”

“ Aunt, if the place had nothing else to recommend it but the man in the rock, I would go there to see him, I think.”

“ The place has a great many more things to recommend it though,” observed Aunt Margaret ; “ for the man has a wife and several children, and, besides that, a regular farm establishment up in his home in the rock. I remember, when I was up there——.”

“ You were up there !—actually up in the man’s place yourself ! and one *can* get up ?” interrupted Eleanor.

“ Decidedly,” was the answer.

“ And you saw——.”

“ Pigs, and a donkey, and ducks, and hens, and chickens, and guinea-pigs, and turtle-doves, and a great many more ‘ beasts ’ than anybody but an Irishman could have borne in such close quarters.”

“ And he is an Irishman, then ?” said Eleanor.

“ Yes.”

“ And what is his name ? ”

“ Excuse me, my dear, I decline any questions about names at present. He is an Irishman, and careless and poor; but at the same time ingenious and witty. And so, being unable to pay rent for a cottage after the usual fashion, and having noticed several holes or caves in that part of the cliff, he bethought himself of turning the caves into rooms, pigstyes, and sheds; and by glazing over a large opening that formed a window in the principal cave, and also by very cleverly contriving a sort of chimney through a crevice enlarged, he got a really very decent sitting-room with a fireplace in it, and with such an amount of furniture—even including three or four books—as made it look quite respectable. For the accommodation thus obtained, the poor Irishman pays a shilling a-year to the Lord of the Manor; and there he has lived for many, many years. His pigstyes are not without the ornament of a tidy gate, and he carries on a profitable trade with his ducks and hens; and, in a sort of ‘entrance-hall’ to his principal room, I observed rabbits and a squirrel in a cage, showing that the man keeps animals from a sentiment of regard, as well as merely for use. There seemed, indeed, to me to be a fine Robinson Crusoe spirit over the whole affair.”

“ There is, indeed,” said Eleanor. “ Is it difficult to get up ? ”

“ Very, Eleanor; but there is always a bevy of sailor lads lingering about the ascent if they see a stranger approaching. These boys are of great use,

and, indeed, you can scarcely do without their assistance, though I must confess their roguish faces, half bursting into a laugh at the folly of 'madam' in wanting to go up, made me very ambitious of managing the ascent without them. But I could not succeed, and was at last glad to take the proffered arm. And your cousin, who was with me, and was then a mere child, was escorted up by a sailor lad on each side of him holding up his arms and leading him forward."

"What a lion the man in the rock must be for the watering-place! I suppose everybody goes to see him!" observed Eleanor.

"Not a bit of it, my dear. Of the hundreds upon hundreds who flock yearly to the place, I question if there are a dozen who know of the existence of the Crusoe of the Cliff, or ever saw his window; though, by the way, I have observed it from the sea with the sun lighting it up, glittering in the distance almost like a light-house. The dwelling altogether reminds one forcibly of the prints in Keith's 'Prophecies' of the rocky homes at Petra."

"But how is it, my dear, dear Aunt," asked Eleanor, "that the visitors of the place never go to see such a curious sight?"

"Partly from its situation among the rope-sheds and fishing tackle, I fancy, my dear."

"But why is that a reason, Aunt?"

"Because so many people cannot energize sufficiently to break away from routine, from the re-

gular London-looking streets, and houses, and parades, and drives. The path that leads to the cliff is at the back of the town, and I own that there is an odour of fish in the neighbourhood which offends delicate noses. It is only naturalists that have no noses, remember. I cannot myself say that the smell of fish and tobacco is absolutely charming, Eleanor; but I do maintain that the cuttle fishes, and the shells, and the rope-houses, and the Crusoes in the Cliff, fully counterbalance the trifling annoyance."

"Besides, if people always move in one set way, they must find every place dull."

"That is just what they *do* do, Eleanor, and rail at it for its stupidity, when, in fact, they know nothing of its most amusing side. But how easily they might know! How easily could I, or anyone, who, from age or circumstances, was unencumbered by conventionalities, introduce young folks, at any rate, to interesting views of every place on God's earth, even Hastings included? However, I have one more thing to relate, though I see you are as fidgety as a starting colt."

"I really, Aunt, don't want you to say any more about the place:—I mean, that if you and my uncle will only go there, I shall be delighted; for I would rather go there than anywhere, whether it is really Dover or not."

"Very well. But still you must hear the old woman's story out. Remember now! Before you turned round and saw the window in the rock, you

saw a tilted cart propped up by the side of the road. Nothing but that, you said, and yet that cart—that tilted cart—is almost as interesting an affair as the home in the rock.”

Eleanor looked up at her aunt in doubt, and shook her head.

“ Very well, Eleanor. You are just as obstinate after all as the ladies on the Parade. They will have nothing but a parade turn-out, and you will have nothing just now but a house in a rock. You are, all of you, one as wise as the other.”

“ I give in, my dear Aunt—I give in. Go on. I am all attention. I will look down most amiably from the house in the rock upon the tilted cart on the other side of the path.”

“ You will do well, my dear,” observed Aunt Margaret. “ Look at the cart amiably—ay, and attentively; for do you not see a little ladder of steps going up to the front of it from the ground?”

“ Oh! my dear Aunt!” exclaimed Eleanor, her work slipping from her knee upon the ground as she spoke; “ you don’t mean to say that the cart was inhabited too?”

“ Yes, but I do, my dear; it was another home—as strange and poverty-stricken, if not as adventurous in its character, as the home in the rock. I have been up the little steps into the cart, Eleanor, as well as into the cavern home; and a strange sight I saw there. A poor woman was lying stretched out on a little pallet at the end of the cart, with a new-born baby in her arms. Between that narrow

pallet and the entrance of the cart, a small iron tube had been stuck up through an opening in the canvass as a temporary chimney; and at the bottom of it burned a small fire, and on the fire was a little pot, in which some gruel was being warmed for the poor sick mother. Some woman, out of sheer kind-heartedness, had come in for half-an-hour to help her, give her the gruel, and see if she wanted anything unusual; but when I appeared at the foot of the steps, the woman came down to make way for me to go up, for the place could hardly hold three people. How do you feel now about the tilted cart, my dear? Are you tired of it?"

"I should hate myself if I were not deeply interested, Aunt," said Eleanor, looking down and speaking very earnestly. "But do tell me how you came to think of going up into the cart?"

"By an accident; although only a visitor at the place, I had got to know the family in the cart, my dear. The poor woman's eldest daughter, a strong rough girl of fourteen, was in the daily habit of collecting the sea-weeds and zoophytes that were washed up by the morning's tide, and hawking them about the town for sale. She had come to my lodgings among other places, and I always sent for her saucers of treasures into my room, and generally bought something of her. Poor girl! great were the pains she took to wash and arrange the different tinted sea-weeds so as to give a pretty effect to her wares; and at last she and I got to be great friends, and a compact was entered into between us that I

was to have the refusal of her collection every day, before she showed it to anyone else. It suited both her and me; for the gay pink and green ones that were most attractive I rarely wanted, but purchased of her many a curious dirty-looking thing which would have gone a-begging on the Parade; and at last the girl got to know so well the kind of things I wanted, that she would sometimes say herself, 'I have got nothing to-day, Ma'am, that will suit you. There are only what you have had before.' As soon as her sea-weeds were sold, she invested a small sum of money in oranges, and in hawking these, she passed the rest of her wandering day—at least all the time that could be spared from her mother. I have known her walk a distance of four miles in the early morning to gather sea-weeds from the rocks, when the tide did not serve her purpose in drifting them ashore, and afterwards go back to the same place in the afternoon to sell her oranges in the town there, returning to her cart-home late at night. Our many interviews led to enquiry as to her mode of life and place of abode; and in this manner I became acquainted with the family in the cart, and hurried off to see the poor mother when I heard of the arrival of the baby."

"Why did they live in a cart, Aunt? Do you know?" asked Eleanor.

"For the very same reason that the family over their heads lived in the rock. They could not afford to pay rent for a house. They came from some inland county, where the mother had, she

assured me, respectable relations ; but her husband having fallen into poverty (I fear by drinking, though she never said so), they could not ‘ for shame’ stay among their friends. They did not like the disgrace, and so fixed upon this rambling life as a resource. I forget the husband’s trade ; but he had one. On fine nights, the woman said, the children (of whom there were five) slept underneath the cart. In bad weather they were all huddled together inside. Four other children she had ‘ buried,’ she said ; and truly when I looked upon the poor little new-born babe, I could not but think the fate of ‘ burying’ would be a greater boon to it than the fate of ‘ rearing’ under such painful circumstances. They had visited the place I am describing for three successive years, so that they had got to feel it a kind of home. This woman’s boys were always ready and willing to help any strangers up to the home in the Cliff ; and if you could have heard the woman herself speak of the dwellers in the rock, you would certainly have thought she felt them to be objects of pity as well as curiosity. Yet I can well imagine with what contempt the ingenious Irishman above would look down on the cart and its inhabitants, and feel that it was his superior genius that had raised him to a situation so much more desirable ! You and I, Eleanor, would relish as little the trolloping, tramping life of my cart friends, as the dirt and uncouthness of the Irish folk, whose fowls and pigs lived with them in a sadly too free and intimate manner to be quite agreeable. But still, as phases

of human life, and as the life of creatures like ourselves, preparing ‘through much tribulation’ for a great eternity, I felt both the cases to be highly interesting, and often and often since I left the place, have I recalled the cavern-room with its solitary window, and strangest of all, its little shelf for books. How grand it must have been to watch a winter’s storm through that casement! No winds that ever blew could shake that adamantine dwelling; and to watch the raging sea below it, must have been a strange and awful sight.—I could say a great deal more about the place, and describe an entrance to it unrivalled for beauty, down a hill embosomed in trees. On the one side, a romantic steep scattered over with rocks and furze, amidst which rose the grey old church; the town and castle being visible over the trees before you commenced the descent. And above all, and beyond all, lying in peaceful relief against the red brick buildings, the bright blue sea, dotted over with white sails, and seen through an atmosphere balmy with the hope and promise of health—a hope which, in my case, was fully realized. . . . Come, Eleanor, ring the bell for tea, for I hear your uncle at the gate. Kiss me, my dear niece. I am wide awake now, and fancy that I see by your face that you have more faith in me than in Lady Charlotte Lennox. And certainly you must make your choice in my favour if you wish to see either the *Butlers* in their home in the Cliff, or the *Sweetloves* in their house in the cart; or to ascertain for yourself the insufferable dulness of ——.”

“ *Hastings!* ” cried Eleanor, springing up and standing before her aunt with a glowing face and almost tearful eyes ; and as she thus stood, the door opened and her uncle came in, and, all unconscious of the excitement, said, “ How odd that you should be talking of Hastings, my dear ! You have not heard, Mamma, have you, that I have had the unexpected offer of a house there, and we must start to-morrow ! ”

“ Aunt Margaret,” said Eleanor, when they parted at night, her face radiant with delight, “ I hope I have learnt a lesson for life.”

THE END.

